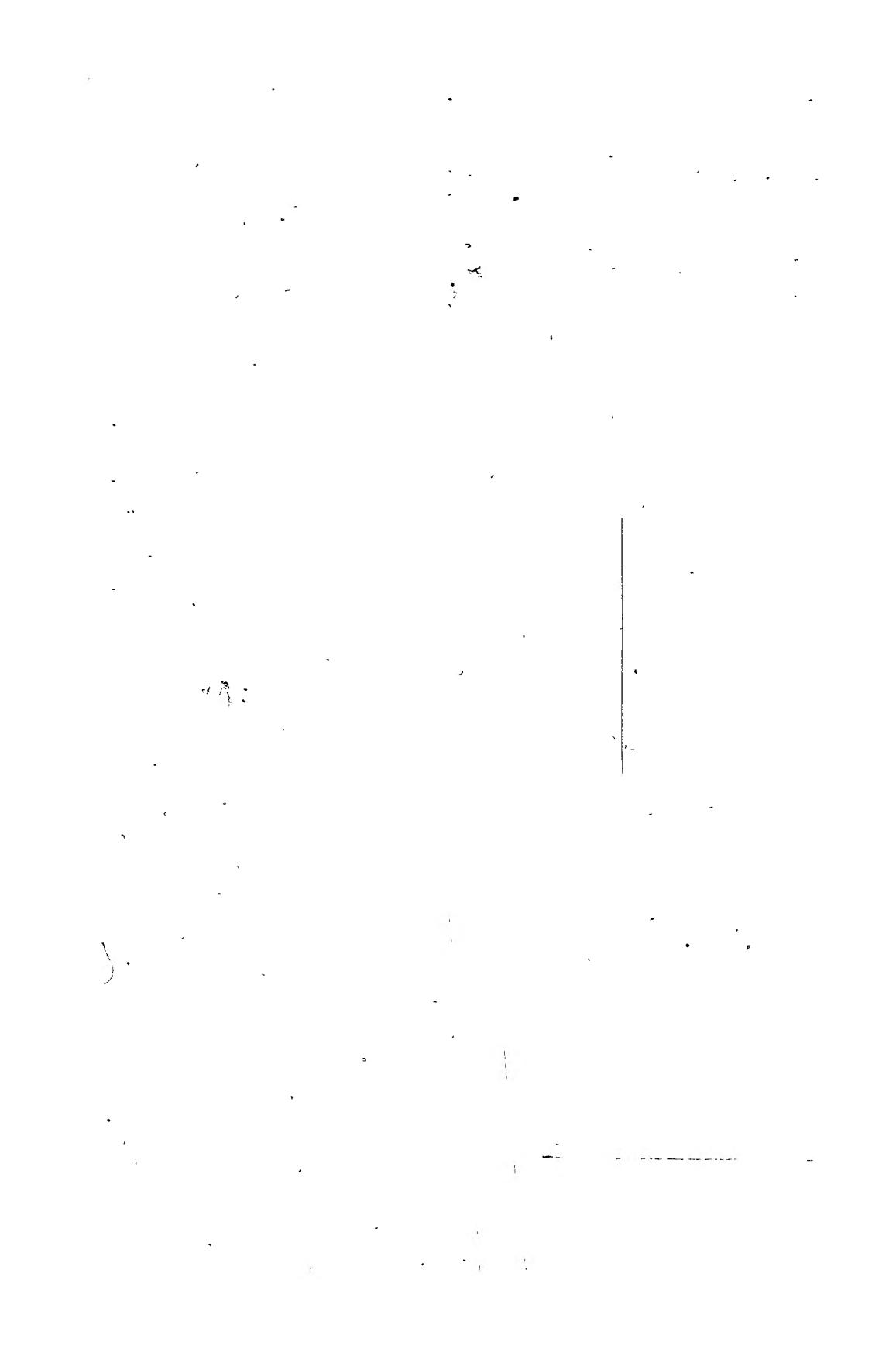
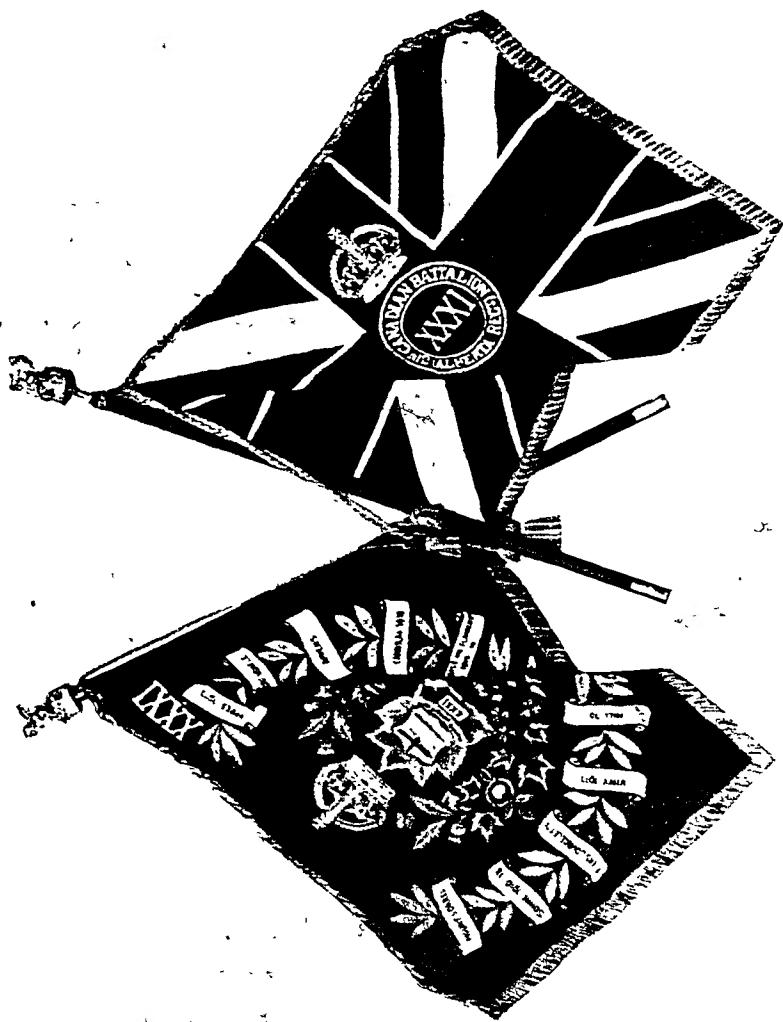


THE LOST MESSAGES

OF E. T.

1904 - 1911





KING'S AND REGIMENTAL COLOURS, 31st BATTALION C.E.F.

Presented: Namur, Belgium, April, 1919.



MAJOR-GENERAL A. H. BELL, CMG, D.S.O.
Original Officer Commanding 31st Battalion, C.E.F.



History of
Thirty-First Battalion
C.E.F.

From its organization November, 1914
to its demobilization June, 1919

*With Nominal Roll and Information as to all
Members of the Unit.*

MATERIAL COMPILED AND ASSEMBLED
BY
H. C. SINGER

FINAL REVISION AND WRITING
BY
A. A. PEEBLES



SINGER, INC

Foreword

Ottawa, November 9th, 1938.

It is with great pleasure that I learn that the history of the 31st Battalion, C.E.F., is on the eve of publication, and I congratulate the Battalion Association on having attained this objective, which marks the conclusion of patient and painstaking efforts. Having been put in touch with progress from time to time, I know something of the many and great difficulties that had to be overcome; difficulties which at times appeared to be insurmountable. In having overcome them and finally completed the long and difficult task, I feel that the Executive and History Committee have earned the warmest thanks from all Members of our Battalion.

I feel assured that the narrative cannot fail to appeal to a large number of people. To the Non-Military reader it will present an interesting picture of the life of our Citizen Soldiers during the Great War. The War Veteran of any unit or branch of the service will find much to remind him of his own experiences, but the deepest and most enthralling interest, will be reserved for the Old "Thirty-first," as he scans its pages. Incidents and events, perforce briefly related, will bring to his mind countless memories; often tragic, sometimes, but less often, gay or humorous; with such pictures rising before his minds eye, the old member of the 31st, will read the book with absorbing interest; but there will be a lump in his throat as he reads, for almost every incident that he recalls, grave or gay, is closely linked with the personalities of comrades who did not survive to return with us.

I shall not attempt to comment upon the career of the 31st Battalion. It will be found set forth as fully as space permitted in the body of the History. I shall confine myself to the straightforward statement that I am, and always have been, very proud of it. I must, however, say a word about the personnel that

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

composed its ranks. In this regard I have always considered the Battalion to have been extremely fortunate. The majority had come from Eastern Canada or the Old Country to settle in the west, and were men of sufficient age and experience to be able to form a reasonable estimate of what War Service would mean. They immediately settled down to the task of fitting themselves as far as possible for the ordeal they knew to be before them. The originals (the Seventy-niners) worked hard and fell into the routine of Military life with surprising rapidity. From the first they laid the foundation of the high Regimental Spirit which characterized the Battalion throughout its existence. This Spirit was amply maintained by those who joined later and as the Unit increased in efficiency and gained experience, it also, increased and strengthened.

I do not think that any commanding officer could have received more loyal support, from all ranks, than I did during the three and a half years of my command. The Battalion gave of its best, under all circumstances. Disciplinary troubles were very few and far between and it had the knack of working in harmony and good comradeship with other Units.

To those who are still living to read these words, I wish that I adequately express the debt that I owe to them and their comrades who have passed on. But I am unable to do so, only very simple words come to me, but I write them with great sincerity and with deep emotion:

Thank you, old comrades, and may God bless you.

A. H. BELL.

Introduction

Few, even of those in whose libraries this volume may find a place of honor as a cherished treasure, may appreciate fully the colossal task represented by its compilation and publication. To depict, in their proper perspective, the actions of so small a unit in such a manner that they will merge with the operations of the British Army as a whole would present a most exacting demand upon any group of writers however skillful, yet a further requirement becomes necessary in a work of this nature. Essentially, its purpose is to record details which will serve memories; to establish the circumstances under which heroic deeds were done by individuals or works of bravery wrought by small groups of men as they confronted daily, the immediate problem of achieving an objective in the face of death. No less important should it be that a work of this nature enshrine the tremendous sacrifices made for one another by comrades who, sharing alike each other's happiness and hardship, laughter and sorrow, plenty and scarcity, became united by bonds of inexplicable devotion and brotherhood undimmed by time and distance—unseverable by death itself.

Confronted by these lofty and exacting demands, those who have contributed to this history have labored under most difficult handicaps. Survivors of battles came from action their minds greatly confused, in numerous instances, regarding exact facts of deeds, localities and other circumstances. The passage of years impaired their memories of details and of the identities of those who also took part. Their minds, recording things of most graphic importance to them as individuals — a narrow escape, a bursting shell, the mangled body of a friend, the annihilation of a whole platoon or company of men by machine gun fire in less time than it takes to tell of it — have failed to perceive the significance of ultimate results or of other circumstances which, had they been fully realized at the moment, would have created in the mind a lasting impression entirely different. The soldier coming from the heat of battle, wonders why there was so much enemy shelling and so little of his own; why his flanks were exposed and why reinforcements failed to arrive and rarely does he come out of battle with a mind completely free from bias, yet from him must the author get the story, and his account must be fitted in with the



accounts of others whose impressions and memories have been subjected to all the similar devastations of time and circumstance.

In the final analysis, the Regimental War Diary must stand as the ultimate authority. Recourse to this source of information has enabled those who have contributed to this work to record seemingly trivial details of dates, duties and localities — not that these might have had any important specific bearing upon the operations of the battalion, the brigade, or corps, but because they may recall to the memory of the reader some incident of personal interest, some friendship with which it may be associated.

Readers who had no part in the events which this history records are asked to remember that it is the history of a breed of peace-loving men — a civilian battalion whose members, unskilled in war, came from the farms, the offices, the industries of the Canadian prairies in general and from the neighborhood of Alberta in particular. They were clerks and students, laborers and mechanics, cowboys and farmers, lawyers and doctors, merchants, miners and ministers. To read of their baptism of fire, their sufferings at St. Eloi, their sacrifices amid the unspeakable horrors of Passchaendaele, their impalement upon the uncut wire at Fresnoy and their heroic assault upon the barricaded village of Rosieres will fill the hearts of the uninitiated with admiration for the fortitude and bravery of these men. To read of their final achievement in victory, their long and arduous march to the Rhine will impress the younger generation with the merits of modesty and discretion which these men displayed under circumstances wherein restraint and kindness toward the vanquished foe yielded them as much credit and honor in peace as did their valour in combat.

The publication of this history has been made possible only by the kind co-operation and hard work of many and sincere thanks are due to Major Gen. Bell, Col. Duguid, The Department of National Defence, Records Branch, Ottawa, and many others, without whose services it would have been most difficult to complete the work. Special mention should be made of the Battalion Executive for their perseverance through all the years in the amalgamation of materials, checking and re-checking.

J. HOWARD GAINOR.

CHAPTER ONE.

Mobilization and Early Training

I.

Prior to 1914 the military history of Canada had not been voluminous. It had contained, it is true, some memorable pages. Speaking in a general way, however, the annals of the Dominion had told of peaceful progress rather than of warlike enterprise: the heroism and hardihood of her people had been exemplified in fields of pioneer endeavour rather than on fields of battle; and the story of her development had been, in the main, a story of advancement along the paths of peace.

At the outbreak of the World War Canada was anything but a martial nation, and the event found her to a large extent unprepared. Her navy was practically negligible. The military forces within her borders consisted of a permanent Headquarters Staff, a few scattered units of regular troops and a Militia comprising some 75,000 men, badly equipped for war service, only partially trained, but, fortunately, fairly well organized. In spite of these facts, however, within eight months of the declaration of war by Britain a division of Canadian troops had commenced to establish for itself in France that fighting reputation which was destined to make the soldiers of the Dominion famous among the finest and best-trained troops in the world. Later the Division was augmented to an army corps, and from first to last Canada sent overseas approximately half a million men, fully equipped and well trained.

It is with one particular unit of the Canadian Expeditionary Force — the 31st Canadian Battalion, Alberta Regiment — that this history deals. Among a body of men such as the Canadian Corps, whose fighting qualities and heroism have been acclaimed by independent historians of both groups of combatant nations, it is invidious to draw comparisons, or to say that the record of any single unit excelled that of all others. In the dispassionate

relation of historical fact which follows, however, there is ample evidence to show that the Battalion whose story is herein related need yield pride of place to none, although it would be the last to claim for itself an achievement superior to that of the other units with which it served.

II.

Early in October, 1914, the Government of Canada, through its Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Sir Robert Borden, offered to the Government of Great Britain a second contingent of troops for service in the Great War. The offer was immediately accepted, and the organization of the 2nd Canadian Division was promptly commenced.

This Division, following the usual practice, consisted of three brigades of infantry, each brigade being composed of four battalions. The latter were raised as separate units in different parts of Canada, and received as such their preliminary training. This was carried out, in most cases, at or near the points of mobilization.

The composition of the 2nd Canadian Division was as follows:

4th CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

Commanded by Col. S. J. A. Denison.

18th Battalion West Ontario commanded by Lieut.-Col. E. S. Wigle.

19th Battalion Ontario, commanded by Lieut.-Col. J. I. McLaren.

20th Battalion North and Central Ontario, commanded by Lieut.-Col. J. A. W. Allen.

21st Battalion Eastern Ontario, commanded by Lieut.-Col. W. St. Pierre Hughes.

5th CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

Commanded by Col. J. P. Landry.

22nd Battalion French Canadians, commanded by Col. F. M. Gaudet.

24th Battalion Victoria Rifles, commanded by Lieut.-Col. J. A. Gunn.

25th Battalion Nova Scotia, commanded by Lieut.-Col. G. A. LeCain.

26th Battalion New Brunswick, commanded by Lieut.-Col. J. L. McAvity.

6th CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

Commanded by Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen.

27th Battalion City of Winnipeg, commanded by Lieut.-Col. I. R. Snider.

28th Battalion North-West, commanded by Lieut.-Col. J. F. L. Embury.

29th Battalion Vancouver, commanded by Lieut.-Col. H. S. Tobin.

31st Battalion Alberta, commanded by Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell.

The organization of the 31st Battalion may be regarded as actually having commenced on November 4th, 1914, when Capt. A. H. Bell, of the Lord Strathcona Horse (R.C.), D.S.A., the first Commanding Officer of the unit, was gazetted Lieut.-Colonel, and authorized to raise and command a battalion of infantry recruited in Alberta. Officially, the date of organization was some two weeks later, on November 17th, the Headquarters of the unit being located in the City of Calgary.

At the date in question the idea was still prevalent that the war would be over in six months, or at most in a year. Operations in France were still, at least to some extent, those of a war of movement. The long stale-mate of trench warfare had not, as yet, established itself as a universal condition. People in Canada, as in other Allied countries, believed that the great thrust of the Central Powers for swift victory had been definitely stemmed, and that the growing strength of the Allied armies would soon sweep the invaders back into their own country. The enemy losses during the advance through Belgium and France were known to have been colossal, and it appeared reasonable to suppose that no army could sustain such casualties without having its strength seriously and permanently impaired.

The public as a whole had not yet become accustomed to thinking in the huge numbers in which the education of the war was later on to teach them to think, and few people had any conception of the magnitude and efficiency of the military weapon controlled by the German General Staff. The Canadian people, had, moreover, no knowledge of the real meaning of war and practically no experience of the War Office telegram and the long casualty list. Business and social activities, sport and amusement went on much as usual, and the only visible symbol of any change was the

increase in the number of field service uniforms in the city streets. The wave of patriotic enthusiasm which had swept the country at the outbreak of the war, and which could have filled the ranks of the First Canadian Contingent many times over, was still undamped, and the war was still regarded by the majority as a novel, distant and rather thrilling excitement which could have little bearing on their own individual existences.

As a result of this enthusiasm recruiting for the 31st Battalion was brisk. The recruiting offices at Calgary and Edmonton, and at towns in Southern Alberta, received far more applicants than the unit could absorb. Within a few days of the issuing of mobilization orders, officers in charge of detachments of newly-enrolled men commenced to arrive at Calgary from the neighbouring prairie towns, as well as from the capital city of Edmonton.

At this period and, indeed, for some considerable time afterwards, the rate at which units could be mobilized was governed by the production of equipment rather than by the rate at which men could be enrolled. Factories in Great Britain and in Canada were quite unprepared for the sudden and unexpected call upon their resources, and for the most part were ill-equipped to deal with it. As a result of this condition war material was less readily available than man-power, and the organization of units was frequently delayed by the slowness with which equipment was sent forward from Ordnance. This was particularly true of the Canadian West, which at this time had to rely entirely on the eastern depots for supplies.

The organization of the 31st Battalion was delayed to some extent by these conditions. By November 26th, however, the unit had been brought up to war strength, less the first reinforcements, and immediately entered upon its training. Three days later the Officers' Mess was opened.

The Battalion was stationed, during its stay in Calgary, in the Horse Show Buildings. Civilian contractors supplied the rations, but the actual feeding of the men was carried out under battalion arrangements. An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the psychology of the public at this time by the fact that almost as much concern was manifest regarding the probable effect of the war upon the success of a forthcoming local poultry show as was evinced towards the outcome of the campaign in Europe, and the operations

of carpenters working on the buildings in preparation for this event were permitted to proceed to the detriment of the training of the Battalion.

On the other hand the people of Calgary as a whole extended unstinted hospitality to the troops, the theatres being particularly generous in providing free entertainment, while the service clubs and patriotic associations were active in the arrangement of concerts and other forms of recreation. It was at a concert at the Grand Theatre, on Sunday, December 13th, to which all ranks had been invited, that Mr. R. B. Bennett, afterwards Prime Minister of Canada, appealed to the audience for drums for the Battalion. The appeal met with an immediate response, Mrs. W. R. Hull presenting the unit with a cheque for \$125.00 on the following day. By January 3rd, 1915, the Battalion had a full bugle band.

The men of the Battalion were an orderly, contented and happy body of troops, and showed the adaptability which is characteristic of the Canadian race in the rapidity with which they adjusted themselves to the changed routine of their lives. At first a mere assembly of untrained civilians, the Alberta Regiment rapidly took on the semblance of an organized military unit, and in a surprisingly short time had become a disciplined battalion.

III.

The strength of the Battalion upon completion of organization was 36 officers and 1,134 other ranks. Of these, 27 officers and 409 other ranks had been recruited from Calgary, 5 officers and 348 other ranks from Edmonton, 101 and 100 other ranks from Medicine Hat and Lethbridge respectively and the balance from Red Deer, Wetaskiwin, Claresholm, Pincher Creek and Youngstown.

The Battalion Headquarters Staff at the time of mobilization consisted of Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, Commanding; Major W. H. Hewgill, Second-in-Command; Lieut. R. D. Davies, Adjutant; Capt. J. C. Page, Quartermaster, and Capt. C. Ross Palmer, Paymaster. The officers' cadre was completed by Major E. G. Mason, Capt. R. W. Walker, Chaplain; Lieut. H. W. McGill, Medical Officer; Capt. G. B. McLeod, Capt. P. J. Daly, D.S.O., Capt. H. M. Splane, Capt. J. L. R. Parry, Capt. W. W. Piper, Capt. L. H. Dawson, Capt. J. D. R. Stewart, Lieut. C. H. Westmore, Lieut. J. C. McPherson, Lieut.

E. E. Bailey, Lieut. A. Blair, Lieut. W. Jewitt, Lieut. P. R. B. Tucker, Lieut. P. G. Toft, Lieut. J. H. L'Amy, Lieut. J. L. Higginson, Lieut. W. H. Leir, Lieut. F. R. Martin, Lieut. L. W. Miller, Lieut. C. Lambert, Lieut. H. H. Whitehead, Lieut. C. H. Hart, Lieut. E. F. Pinkham, Lieut. W. McIntosh and Lieut. W. Motherwell.

Shortly after organization, Lieut. R. D. Davies was transferred to the 13th Canadian Mounted Rifles, and was succeeded by Capt. A. E. Myatt, who had been promoted from the rank of Lieutenant. On January 11th, 1915, Lieut. W. F. Seaton was commissioned from the ranks and appointed Assistant Adjutant.

In common with other Canadian units at this date, the Battalion was organized on the eight-company system, but on January 4th, 1915, the new four-company formation was adopted, and four officers were appointed Company Commanders with the rank of Major. These were Major J. D. R. Stewart, Major L. H. Dawson, Major E. S. Doughty and Major P. J. Daly, D.S.O. Subsequently Major Stewart was appointed Third-in-Command, and Capt. H. M. Splane was promoted to the rank of Major and took over command of A Company.

On December 14th, 1914, it was decided to add the first reinforcements, consisting of 100 of all ranks. The additional men were at once enlisted, the Battalion being thereby brought up to full war strength.

IV.

By early December, 1914, some two weeks after the official date of organization, and within four months of Britain's entry into the war, the Battalion had commenced its preliminary training. The syllabus was similar, in its main features, to that adopted by other Canadian units at this period. Both officers and men were worked extremely hard, but invariably carried out their duties with a maximum of willingness and a minimum of complaint. The keenness, energy and enthusiasm of the Officer Commanding, and the other officers associated with him in the control of the Battalion, permeated all ranks; and the rigours and occasional monotony of continual drilling and route marching in the cold of the Canadian winter were endured with a cheerfulness which served as an excellent criterion of the spirit which was to characterize the Battalion in the still greater test of war. Training

which, under normal peace conditions, would have occupied months was concentrated into a few weeks, and under the influence of continual and intensive work the Battalion made rapid progress in its military education.

In addition to the usual battalion training, the instruction of Headquarters Sections was pushed forward with all possible expedition. These sections had been formed as early as November 20th, with Lieut. F. R. Martin in command of the machine guns, Lieut. C. H. Westmore in charge of the signallers, and Lieut. H. Sproston taking over the duties of Battalion Transport Officer. The scouts, which were to render such splendid service later, were under the supervision of Lieut. J. H. L'Amy, while the First Aid and Sanitary Squads received their training at the hands of Capt. H. W. McGill, C.A.M.C.

The duration of the preliminary training of the Battalion in Calgary was rather less than six calendar months. That it was both thorough and comprehensive is amply evinced by the condition of the men and the discipline of the unit as a whole at the date of its departure for England. To quote from the war diary of Major W. H. Hewgill under the date of March 10th, 1915:

“The Battalion has put in a splendid period of training, and is in first-class shape . . . No finer body of men were ever brought together.”

That Major Hewgill's opinion of the unit of which he was the Second-in-Command was justified is amply demonstrated by its subsequent record.

Some of the original officers of the 31st Battalion were transferred to other units during the period of training in Calgary. Major E. G. Mason and Capt. J. L. R. Parry joined the 50th Canadian Battalion; Capt. G. B. McLeod and Lieut. W. H. Leir went to the 51st Battalion; Lieut. J. L. Higginson to the 49th Battalion; Lieut. W. McIntosh and Lieut. L. W. Miller to the 12th Canadian Mounted Rifles, and Lieut. R. D. Davies, as previously stated, to the 13th Canadian Mounted Rifles. To fill the vacancies caused by these transfers promotions were made from the ranks. Lieut. A. E. Boucher, Lieut. C. A. Bateman, Lieut. W. J. Hall, Lieut. V. J. L. Eccles, Lieut. R. Pouncey, Lieut. W. R. Wooley-Dod, Lieut. W. R. Foster and Lieut. H. Sproston were appointed to commissioned rank before the departure of the Battalion from Calgary.

V.

Several events occurred during the period in which the 31st Battalion was stationed in Calgary which are, perhaps, worthy of record. First things and last things are always more or less memorable, and few who took part in it are likely to forget the first route march. This took place on December 3rd, 1914, the route followed being over the Second Street East bridge and across the Canadian Northern Railway tracks to the high ground above the Elbow River, where battalion drill was carried out.

On January 16th, 1915, the first military tournament was held in the Horse Show Buildings, before a large attendance of the public. The events of the day were both varied and interesting, and included fencing, tent-pegging, the V. C.'s race, physical drill, bare-back wrestling, an inter-company relay race and other items. So well contested and lengthy were some of the events, notably the fencing contests, that the finals had to be postponed to the following day, when the prizes were presented to the winners by Mrs. A. H. Bell, wife of the Commanding Officer.

The first inspection of the Battalion by Major-Gen. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, took place at Victoria Park, Calgary, on January 20th, 1915, the men being paraded in the centre of the race track. A picked guard of honour of a hundred men under the command of Major Stewart met the General at the C.P.R. depot and acted as escort on the way to the review ground. Although the unit had then been in training for little more than seven weeks, the Minister spoke highly of the bearing of the troops and the appearance and discipline of the Battalion.

About two weeks later, on February 3rd, orders were received from the East that all units were to be brought up to war strength in readiness for departure for England. In anticipation of the probable entraining of the Battalion at an early date, a special parade was held on February 17th to the City Hall, where the unit was received by the Mayor of Calgary and other civic officials, the Brigade Commander, Lieut.-Col. H. D. B. Ketchen, taking the salute as the troops marched by the corner of 2nd Street East and 7th Avenue.

A week later, on February 24th, Major-Gen. S. B. Steele, who had been appointed Inspector General of Western Canada in the

preceding December, visited Calgary on his way to the Coast, and reviewed the Battalion.

On April 11th, the unit made its first public appearance with the Regimental Band, attending on this occasion Divine service, while two weeks later a very impressive ceremony was held in the Church of the Redeemer, attended by members of the 31st Battalion and the 12th Canadian Mounted Rifles, to commemorate their comrades of the First Canadian Division who had fallen in making so glorious a stand in the Second Battle of Ypres.

From this time onwards the band was a regular feature of the church parade for those members of the Battalion who observed the Anglican creed. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, were compelled to march to their place of worship in silence, until Capt. Macpherson, not to be outdone by the adherents of any rival denomination, got together a few pipers and organized a pipe band of his own. Thereafter, for a few Sundays, the Presbyterians marched to Divine service to the martial music of the homeland of their faith, and continued in this prideful path until the unofficial band was suppressed by the Commanding Officer. Whether this drastic step was taken by reason of an inherent, if ill-judged, dislike of the pipes on the part of Col. Bell, or in order to spare the citizens of Calgary unnecessary suffering, or merely to prevent bloodshed and an internecine religious war, the records do not reveal.

As might be expected when a number of men, few of whom possessed previous military experience, are brought together as a military unit, the training period was not devoid of humorous incidents. On one occasion Capt. Macpherson was making a round of the C Company quarters when, on entering one of the cubicles, he came upon one Pte. McKie lying in one of the middle bunks smoking a pipe. McKie observed his superior officer and, anxious to show that respect for authority which was being rapidly instilled into him, but as yet somewhat lacking in knowledge of military etiquette, solemnly saluted with pipe in mouth while still stretched prone upon his bunk.

On another occasion the same officer was making a round of inspection as Officer of the Guard when he was suddenly and startlingly challenged. He looked all round, but could see no one, and, not having answered, he was again challenged from the void. This time he located the voice and discovered the sentry taking his

ease in comfort in an excavation some five feet deep which had been made in connection with some projected building operation. Asked how long he had been there he replied, "Ever since I came on guard, sir!" Luckily, ere the Battalion had reached France, the men had learned better the duties of a sentry.

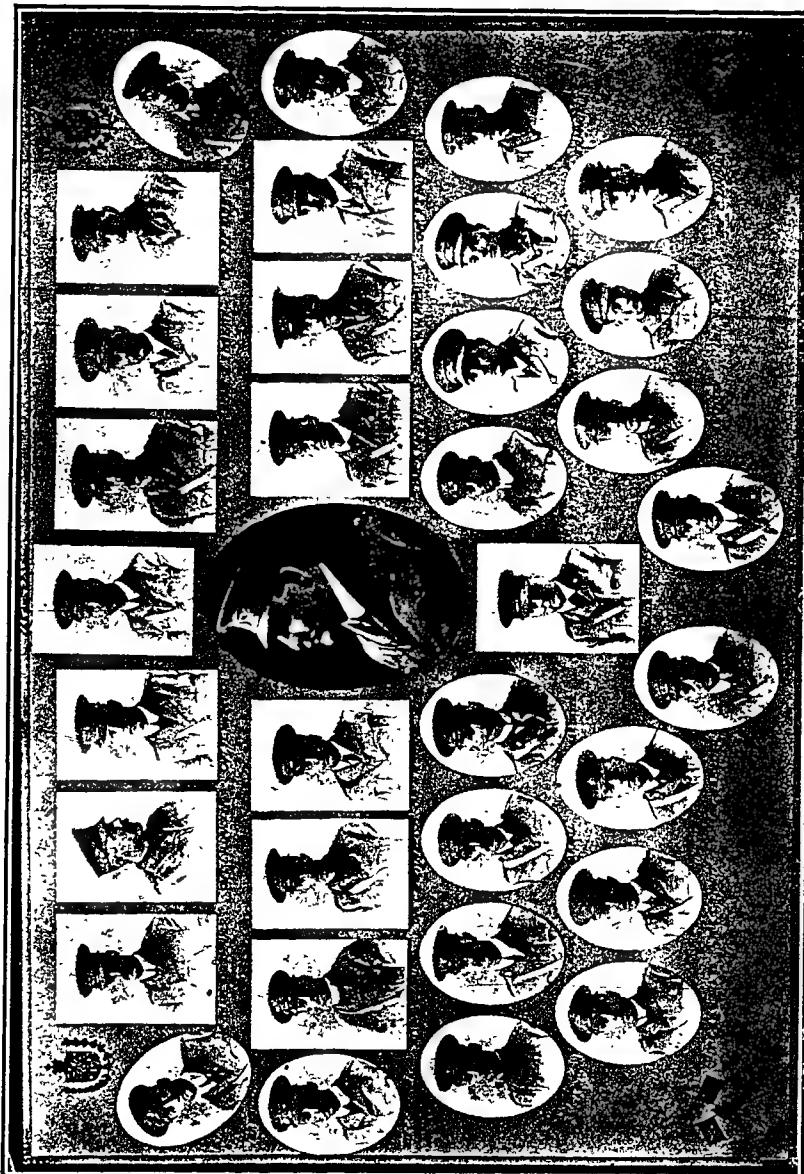
VI.

On May 11th, 1915, the eagerly-awaited orders for the Battalion to entrain 'for an unknown destination' were received.

This news was welcomed by all ranks. Foolish though it may appear today, in the light of subsequent events, there were still many who thought that the war would not last through the year, and there was more than a little apprehension among the men of the Battalion that the fighting would be over before they reached the theatre of operations. To the people of Canada the war was still remote; in spite of the heavy casualties of the 1st Canadian Division at Ypres, few as yet realized fully the seriousness of the situation; and the unjustified optimism expressed in even the more responsible papers of the period tended to give colour to the idea of an early termination of hostilities. Under such circumstances the jubilation of both officers and men at the prospect of an immediate start on the first stage of the journey to the trenches is easily understood.

All preparations for departure were completed promptly, but an unexpected delay was encountered before the unit finally pulled out of Calgary. At this period, and, indeed, throughout the war, spy scares were prevalent, and the discovery of the theft of some dynamite from the Canadian Pacific Railway was quite sufficient to cause the authorities to completely change their plans. Instead of leaving on May 11th, and travelling by the Canadian Pacific Railway, two trains made up into one section were rushed from Winnipeg to Calgary over the Canadian Northern Railway, and the routing of the troop trains over the first stage of their journey was changed from the Canadian Pacific to the latter system. Whether the theft was in actual fact the work of spies, or whether it was perpetrated, as seems more likely, by some indigent miner in need of a cheap explosive for blasting purposes, never transpired. If, however, enemy agents with designs on the safety of the 31st

Original Officers, 31st Battalion, C.E.F., 1914.





Battalion were at the bottom of the matter, the action of the authorities effectively check-mated them, and the unit reached its port of embarkation without misadventure.

At about 11.00 a.m., on Tuesday, May 12th, the left half of the Battalion, consisting of C and D Companies and half the regimental staff left Calgary under the command of Major J. D. R. Stewart. Two and a half hours later the right half of the unit, consisting of A and B Companies and the rest of the Staff, followed it. One officer, Lieut. Eccles, and 99 other ranks were left behind as reinforcements. This party subsequently rejoined the Battalion about a month later at Dibgate Camp, in England. It is worth noting, as an indication of the spirit of the men, that after the troop trains had left Calgary it was discovered that some of the men who should have remained behind with the reinforcements had managed to evade the guards and to join the ranks of those proceeding overseas. What disciplinary action was taken in this connection is not recorded, but one cannot help hoping that no very exemplary punishment was handed out.

The journey across Canada, which occupied almost five clear days, proved very pleasant and comfortable, and in the early morning of May 17th the troop trains arrived at Quebec, and the men detrained in preparation for their journey overseas.

VII.

Breakfast had been served before the arrival of the troop trains at Quebec, and at 8.00 a.m. the Battalion was inspected by Major-Gen. Sam Hughes. Shortly after 9 o'clock the work of embarkation had commenced.

The 31st Battalion shared the S.S. "Carpathia," of the Cunard Line, with the 27th Battalion (City of Winnipeg Regiment), the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade Headquarters Staff and Borden's Armoured Machine Gun Battery. In all approximately 2,200 troops were on board when, shortly after noon, the transport sailed.

The trans-Atlantic crossing occupied eleven days, and was by no means a pleasant voyage. The accommodation was quite inadequate for the number of troops carried. A considerable number of the men were surplus to the available sleeping quarters between

decks, and many were compelled to make their beds in the lee of hatch combings and other superstructures. To make matters worse the weather, during the first few days of the journey, was cold, with occasional heavy flurries of snow and cutting winds, and altogether the lot of those exposed at night to such conditions was not an enviable one.

The messing arrangements and commissariat generally were also anything but satisfactory, probably on account of the abnormal numbers for whom food had to be provided, and more than once the stew was found to contain accidental ingredients of a nature not provided for in messing regulations or the official army ration. During the day the congested condition of the decks rendered active games and sufficient physical exercise impossible, while the life-boat accommodation was altogether inadequate for the number of men on board.

The S.S. "Carpathia" made the entire crossing without escort. The German submarines had already become a very real menace to shipping, but it is to be presumed that the British Admiralty had the situation in hand and did not, on this particular occasion, anticipate danger. As the zone within radius of submarine action was approached, however, the men were ordered to wear their life belts and carry their water bottles continuously. No enemy vessel was actually encountered during the voyage, although it was known that there was one operating in the near vicinity of the transport. As the S.S. "Carpathia" neared her destination the sailing ship, "Nebraska" was torpedoed and sunk off the Fastnet, a lighthouse in the Atlantic, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-west of Cape Clear, from which the liner was then distant some twenty miles. News of this sinking was received at about 6.00 p.m., on May 27th, and, as a result, course was altered to the south until about 2.00 a.m. on the following day, when course was again changed and the ship steered north for Plymouth Sound.

On the seventh day out from Quebec, Pte Sims, of B Company, fell overboard and was drowned, in spite of efforts to save him, and on the night of May 26th the "Carpathia" had a narrow escape from collision with a brig. Both ships, being in the danger zone, were sailing without navigation or other lights, and disaster was avoided only by a matter of feet.

Land was sighted at about 10.00 a.m. on May 28th. The morning was fair, with a soft blue sky flecked with fleecy clouds, and a blue and placid sea. As the early mists evaporated, the bold headland of Plymouth Hoe appeared on the port bow. For many on board this was their first sight of English soil; for others it was a home-coming after long absence; and for all it provided a memory destined to endure while life itself endures. Officers and men lined the rails as the land drew slowly nearer, and even climbed into the lower rigging, the better to view the changing panorama of headland and inlet, of hanging woods and sunny uplands, and of the thronged shipping in the busy harbour.

The reception of the transport as she steamed slowly up Plymouth Sound was stirring in its enthusiasm. The masts and yards of the picturesque training ships, reminiscent of the time of Nelson, which lay at anchor in the harbour were manned by the cadets of the Royal Navy, who cheered the "Carpathia" as she passed; cheering crowds lined the terraced slopes of the Hoe, and the whole of the city shore-line; every steamship in the sound and every dockyard and factory on shore kept their sirens blaring as the liner made its way to its berth. Surely few on board the incoming liner could have remained unmoved by the heartiness of the first welcome extended by the Mother Country to her fighting sons from the Dominion.

At 2.15 p.m. the liner dropped anchor in Plymouth Sound, and some three hours later tied up to the dock at Devonport. Only an advance party, under the command of Capt. J. C. Macpherson, landed on May 28th. The rest of the Battalion disembarked on the following day, and proceeded by rail to Dibgate Camp, in Kent, where it arrived at about 7.00 p.m., after a long and tedious journey and an uphill march of rather more than four miles from Shorncliffe station.

CHAPTER TWO

Training in England

I.

The world can show, surely, few more beautiful countrysides than that of the county of Kent in the spring and early summer. Girt by the blue waters of the English Channel, it is a land of soft and varied loveliness, of rolling upland and verdant marsh, of copse and woodland and picturesque farmsteadings, of sleepy, old-world towns and winding lanes shaded by hedgerows rich with blossoms and ancient trees.

In the midst of country such as this the 31st Battalion had its camp. This was located at Dibgate, which is situated on the chalk hills overlooking the waters of the English Channel, rather more than four miles as the crow flies, west of Shorncliffe, where the Reserve Brigade of the 1st Canadian Division was stationed, and nearly six miles from the seaside resort of Folkestone. On clear days the cliffs of France are visible from the hill tops, shining white across the narrow seas; and occasionally, when the wind was favourable, the distant rumble of the guns in France and Flanders could be heard. South of the camp, at the foot of the hills and on the sea-board, stands the old and picturesque town of Hythe, with its military canal constructed during the Napoleonic wars, and its famous school of musketry, while not far distant is the site of an encampment once occupied by the Roman legions of Caesar.

In normal times these chalk hills of southern England are covered with short sweet grasses and starred with wild flowers, and afford excellent grazing for large flocks of Southdown sheep. Under the rough usage of military occupation, however, the grass in the vicinity of the camps had been, for the most part, worn away, leaving a surface of chalky earth, uncomfortably dusty in hot weather and slippery with a greasy mud when wet.

The camp was centered in a district of intense naval and military activity. Transports and hospital ships were continually

passing to and fro between Dover and Folkestone and the French ports of Calais and Boulogne; destroyers and cruisers, tramps and liners steamed up and down the channel, while overhead aeroplanes from a neighbouring aerodrome of the Royal Flying Corps droned, slowly and clumsily as judged by modern standards, across the sky. The roads and lanes in the vicinity were crowded with military transport, staff cars, artillery and troops — British and Canadian —on route marches or proceeding to their training grounds, while the streets of the neighbouring towns of Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate and Seabrook were thronged with officers and other ranks in the khaki uniforms of war-service.

On the whole the 2nd Canadian Division was very much more fortunate in its training experiences in England than the 1st Division had been. Although quite as rigorous, and almost certainly more thorough, it was carried out in infinitely preferable circumstances and surroundings, Dibgate, Otterpool and St. Martin's Plain were in all respects more pleasant places than Pond Farm Camp, Bulford and the muddy desolation of Larkhill; the heat and occasional dust of the English summer were far less unpleasant than the continual rains and omnipresent mud with which the 1st Division had been compelled to contend throughout the autumn and winter of the previous year; and the amusements and recreations afforded by the pleasure resorts in the neighbourhood of Dibgate were a great improvement upon the limited amenities available in the rural villages of Salisbury Plain.

It was Saturday when the 31st Battalion marched into its camp at Dibgate, and the following day the men were allowed to rest and to settle down in their new quarters. Then commenced a period of training more strenuous and exacting, and under a much sterner discipline, than any the unit had so far experienced. This drastic treatment, however, had its effect. The Battalion, already far advanced along the road of soldierly efficiency, became more efficient; the bearing of the men, already smart, became smarter; and individually both officers and men achieved a greater hardihood, became more inured to fatigue and physically fitter, until the longest and most arduous day could be gone through without exhaustion.

On June 3rd, five days after its arrival at Dibgate Camp, the Battalion was inspected by Major-Gen. S. B. Steele, C.B., who

expressed his satisfaction at the appearance of the men and at the rapidity with which they had settled down in their new quarters. Six days later an officer and 88 other ranks arrived from Canada and were taken on the strength.

During the first month in camp the weather was generally warm and fine, and as a result rapid progress was made in the routine of training. Company and battalion drill and manoeuvres, trench digging and similar work occupied most of the time. Courses of special instruction in bayonet fighting, grenade throwing, machine gunnery, musketry, signalling and map reading were also inaugurated, and were continued during the whole of the four months' stay of the unit in England. Officers and other ranks attending these courses in turn gave instruction to the various companies, the training of the unit being thereby greatly facilitated. On June 24th General Dixon inspected the practical work of the Battalion, and in expressing his entire satisfaction with the progress made, suggested that the time was ripe to proceed with more advanced training.

Dominion Day, July 1st, was observed as a half holiday, and was celebrated by the holding of Brigade sports. In these the 31st Battalion acquitted itself very creditably, winning two events and being well placed in several others, including a second in the inter-unit tug-of-war.

In July and, in fact, during the last week of June as well, following the recommendations made by Gen. Dixon, the training of the unit underwent a change. Field manoeuvres and brigade training were substituted for company exercises. Trench digging, route marching and battalion training were continued, while in addition to this the unit completed its musketry on the ranges of Lydd.

There was some criticism, perhaps not altogether without justification, of certain aspects of this training, particularly of the field manoeuvres. The war on the Western Front had ceased by this time to be a war of movement and had developed into what seemed likely to be a permanent state of trench warfare. In view of these facts training in the technique of mobile war appeared to be unnecessary. Many thought, with some measure of reason, that time so spent would have been better employed in attaining a more complete mastery of the methods of trench fighting, concern-

ing which there was much to be learned. It must be remembered, however, that on other fronts and in other parts of the world wars of movement were still being waged, and that the demands of the military situation might have called for the employment of Canadian troops in some part of the war zone other than the 350 miles of trenches which stretched through France and Flanders. In addition to this consideration, a break-through by either side might, at any moment, convert the static state of trench warfare into a war of movement, either locally or along a wide portion of the front. In view of these contingencies it was deemed desirable to have the men trained in both methods of fighting, and although a considerable time was to elapse before the 31st Battalion was called upon to employ in the field the tactics learned at Dibgate Camp, the foresight which prepared the men for all eventualities is hardly to be condemned. Had there been more pre-vision and greater preparedness for future possibilities on the part of British statesmen in the years immediately preceding the war the history of the years 1914, 1915 and 1916 might have been vastly different.

II.

On July 8th the Battalion struck camp and moved to Lydd, marching by way of Hythe, Dymchurch and New Romney, a distance of about seventeen miles. The advance party left camp at 6.00 a.m., and were followed by the main body some two hours later, by which time tents had been struck, packed and loaded, and the lines cleared. Lydd was reached by 2.00 p.m., and within four hours the tents were up and the camp formed. This work was not accomplished any too soon, as shortly after its completion the rain commenced to fall heavily.

The musketry courses commenced on the following day, and on July 10th Lieut.-Col. Bell proceeded to Ireland on a week's leave, the command being taken over in his absence by Major W. H. Hewgill. On July 13th the Battalion had an unexpected visit from Major-Gen. S. B. Steele, attended by his Aide-de-Camp and Col. G. E. Hughes, the son of Maj.-Gen. Sam Hughes, while on the following day Gen. Hughes himself accompanied Gen. Steele on a second visit.

Lydd provided, at this period, a somewhat caustic commentary on one of the most serious aspects of the war from the point of

view of the Allies — that of the lamentable shortage of ammunition. In addition to its rifle ranges, Lydd is an important centre of gun testing and gunnery training, and at the time of the visit of the 31st Battalion some 40 to 50 batteries of howitzers were located there. For these guns hardly a shell was available, and they were, as a result, condemned to enforced idleness. This state of affairs would have been bad enough had it applied only to the training centres of England; that it applied also to the actual battle fronts in France was deplorable. The 1st Canadian Division, entrenched at this time at Festubert, were being subjected to an almost continual shell fire to which no effective reply was possible owing to lack of ammunition. Few who have not experienced it can appreciate the strain placed upon troops by long-continued shelling to which their own guns are making no adequate reply. In France and Flanders during 1915 this was an experience to which the British troops were subjected daily, and no greater proof of their courage and endurance could possibly be adduced than the fact that they suffered it with unshaken morale.

It was not only in the matter of guns, and of ammunition for the guns, that the Central Powers at this period had an overwhelming advantage. The same thing applied to machine guns, of which they had a tremendous preponderance. This enabled them to hold their lines with comparatively few men, supported by many machine-gun posts, whereas the Allies were compelled to secure their positions mainly by rifle fire, this involving the employment of much greater man-power than would have otherwise been necessary. It was largely due to the fact that long stretches of line could be held comparatively thinly that the German General Staff was able to throw such large masses of men into their offensive movements — an advantage which the Allies, thanks to lack of foresight and preparedness, did not enjoy. In the air also, at this time, the enemy had a distinct advantage in spite of the courage and resource of the Allied pilots, and thereby obtained superior artillery observation and more accurate information as to the movements of troops.

In this modern mechanized warfare the infantryman, individually and collectively, was lost, unless supported by adequate shell fire. He had his rifle, his bombs and his bayonet. These were effective, up to a point, in defence, although less so than a sufficient

number of machine guns would have been. In attack, however, against uncut wire entanglements, active machine-gun posts, the shrapnel barrage and undamaged trenches manned by riflemen the weapons of the infantryman were practically worthless. This lesson was destined to be learned at last by the higher commands on the Western Front, but the cost of its teaching was to be heavy in the lives of men; it was destined to be learned at last by the politicians in England, who were still thinking more of party and power and expediency than of guns and munitions and aeroplanes, but the price of the lesson was to be paid in blood.

III.

On July 16th the Battalion returned to Dibgate, where it was intended to bivouac over night, and to proceed to Beachborough Park on the following day for a brigade inspection by the Right Hon. Sir R. L. Borden, Prime Minister of Canada; Mr. R. B. Bennett, M.P., and Major-Gen. S. B. Steele. Immediately upon arrival, however, the rain commenced, and continued heavily throughout the night. Under these circumstances the men availed themselves of the hospitality extended by the 28th Canadian Battalion, the two units sharing tent accommodation designed for only one. This meant uncomfortably restricted quarters, but was infinitely preferable to spending the night in the pouring rain.

The following day the Battalion paraded at 6.30 a.m., and very shortly afterwards the rain, which had lasted most of the night, recommenced with renewed violence. It continued to rain heavily during the march from Dibgate to Beachborough, and ere the latter place was reached officers and men were drenched to the skin. In spite of this, however, the unit presented a fine appearance as it marched past the saluting point, and received a considerable amount of applause. On this occasion the command was in the hands of Major W. H. Hewgill, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell being still on leave in Ireland.

During the following days the bad weather continued. Upon its return to Lydd the Battalion carried out such musketry practice as was possible on the ranges, and general training continued in so far as the weather permitted.

Orders were received on July 26th to move the Battalion to Otterpool, and Major W. H. Hewgill proceeded on the same day to

locate a new camp site at that point. The Battalion followed on the 30th, the men having breakfasted, struck tents and completed all preparations to move by 8.15 a.m.

On August 4th, the first anniversary of the Empire's declaration of war, the entire Division was again inspected at Beachborough Park, on this occasion by the Right Hon. Mr. Bonar Law, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Major-Gen. Sam Hughes. It rained with almost tropical heaviness while the review was in progress and throughout the return march to Otterpool, a distance of about six miles. During the review the British Cabinet Minister addressed the men on the parade ground, and the same evening gave a second address to the officers at the Territorial Drill Hall in Folkestone. On the same date another section of battalion scouts, which were destined later to play such a gallant part under the test of active service, was formed.

Field days, entrenching, tactical exercises, route marching, bayonet fighting and divisional manoeuvres occupied the month of August. On the 16th the Division undertook a route march during which it was reviewed by Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra of Teck and Major-Gen. S. B. Steele. On this occasion the weather, following the precedent established at the reviews and inspections of the First Canadian Contingent and consistently maintained for the benefit of the 2nd Division, was again of the very worst, pouring rain accompanying the troops during most of the day. In the evening the officers attended a garden party given by Major-Gen. Steele in honour of Her Royal Highness.

During the month air raids over the county of Kent by German Zeppelins caused some diversion. All lights in the camp were extinguished on the night of August 12th, and on the 17th, bombs were dropped at Ashford, an important railway centre some score of miles inland. No attack was made, however, upon the Canadian camps at this time.

Considerable excitement was aroused throughout the Division on August 29th, when it was learned that all leave was cancelled in anticipation of an early departure for France. This eagerly-awaited move was not, however, destined to take place immediately, and another spell of training followed. The last few days of the month were spent in trench warfare — bayonet fighting and bomb throw-

ing, including practice with live bombs, of which a supply was available for instructional purposes in spite of the fact that the troops at the front were insufficiently supplied with hand grenades.

All that could possibly be accomplished in one week of training was carried out in that last week. Machine-gun schools were established under the supervision of Captain Lindsay, seconded for this purpose from a machine-gun school in France. All officers and N. C. O.'s were compelled to undergo instruction at this school, and the information gained was destined to prove of great service later. First aid classes were also organized for all ranks, at which instruction was given in the rudiments of emergency treatments and the use of field dressings.

The final review of the 31st Battalion in England took place on September 2nd, when the whole of the 2nd Division, with all its auxiliaries, paraded before His Majesty King George V. and Lord Kitchener. Between thirty and forty thousand Canadian troops marched past the saluting point in company column, and tendered their Sovereign the homage of the soldier—eyes right.

As usual, the weather held true to its reputation, and a drizzling rain fell throughout the proceedings. This damped the persons, but not the spirit, of the troops, who presented a magnificent spectacle. The scene was a most impressive one — a panorama of martial pride which will not be readily forgotten by any who witnessed it.

One by one the battalions left their ground in columns of fours, wheeled, and marched towards the saluting point, bayonets fixed and the officers' swords naked. Then came the order, repeated down the lines from company to company, "Facing left, advance in column of companies," and the files of four became long unwavering lines of marching men crowned with the shimmer of unsheathed steel. Past the saluting point they marched in even ranks, line upon line of trained troops, moving as one, while the head of their Empire stood at the salute and watched them pass.

The 2nd Canadian Division, like the First Contingent, was composed entirely of picked men; like the 1st Division, it could have filled its ranks thrice over from those who volunteered, and only the best were accepted. For nine and a half months the men had undergone intensive training; and now, at the end of it all, the

Division had been welded into as fine a military unit as any general could wish to command. The average height of the men was approximately five feet nine inches, and all were as near physical perfection as careful selection and thorough training could make them. A retired general of the British Army who witnessed this final review, commenting in the "Daily Mirror" upon the efficiency and physique of the men, remarked that a whole brigade of Guards could have been picked from the Division.

After the inspection the following farewell message was received from the King and published for the information of all ranks:

"Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the 2nd Canadian Division: Six months ago I inspected the 1st Canadian Division before their departure for the Front. The heroism they have since shown upon the field of battle has won for them undying fame. You are now leaving to join them, and I am glad to have had an opportunity of seeing you to-day; for it has convinced me that the same spirit which animated them, inspires you also. The past weeks at Shorncliffe have been for you a period of severe and rigorous training; and your appearance at this inspection testifies to the thoroughness and devotion to duty with which your work has been performed. You are going to meet hardships and dangers, but the steadiness and discipline, which have marked your bearing on parade to-day, will carry you through all difficulties. History will never forget the loyalty and readiness with which you rallied to the aid of your Mother Country in the hour of danger. My thoughts will be always with you. May God bless you and bring you victory."

Comparisons are invidious, yet there can be but little doubt that the 2nd Canadian Division was better fitted in some respects for the work which lay ahead of it than the 1st Division had been upon its departure from England. Its mobilization had been less hurried; its training had lasted for a longer period by over three months, and had been based upon the experience gained by seven additional months of warfare. At the Second Battle of Ypres, however, the 1st Division had laid the foundation of that reputation which subsequent Canadian divisions inherited, and were

destined to perpetuate. There, in the fatal Salient, little less than nine months after mobilization, the men of the Dominion had stemmed the rush of the flower of the German Army when the French Colonial divisions on the Canadian left had broken under the fumes of poison gas. Outnumbered, out-gunned and decimated, choked by the insidious poison of the chlorine, without adequate support and with their left flank in the air, the Canadians had fought on grimly, and had brought the enemy to a stand. In the words of the official communique of Sir John French, "The Canadians had saved the situation," and prevented a complete break-through at this critical point. Thereafter the men of the Dominion were to share with the pick of the British regiments the posts of honour in important key positions in both attack and defence, and were to win, at the cost of heavy casualties, a fame which surely must live while Canada exists as a nation.

IV.

On September 3rd the men of the 31st Battalion paraded to Sandling to have their Ross rifles rebored, and four days later orders were received to be prepared to move at a moment's notice. Webb equipment was immediately issued to all ranks, and final preparations for departure overseas were pushed forward as rapidly as possible. A base detail of eight officers and 132 other ranks was formed and transferred to the 9th Reserve Battalion, field dressings were issued and other minor matters attended to.

The anticipated move did not take place immediately, however, and on September 11th the Division organized and held a very successful athletic sports meeting on the Westenhanger race course. Early on the following morning Pte. Shaw, of B Company, died of pneumonia in Moore Barracks Hospital, Shorncliffe, this being only the second death which had occurred in the unit during the ten months since its mobilization.

At last, on September 14th, orders were received for the advance party to proceed on the following day to the port of embarkation with the machine guns and all transport. The necessary preparations were soon completed, and at 1.15 a.m. on September 15th, Major W. H. Hewgill, accompanied by Lieut. F. R. Martin, Lieut. H. Sproston and 109 other ranks left Otterpool

for Shorncliffe, where they entrained for Southampton, from which port they sailed in the late afternoon of the same day.

The main body of the Battalion left Otterpool at 6 o'clock on the evening of September 16th, and marched to Folkestone. It was a hot and sultry night, and the men were heavily laden with their packs, rifles, great coats and all the other impedimenta which they were taking with them to France. This made the march through Lympne, Hythe and Sandgate an extremely trying one, and the men were distinctly weary when they were at last halted in the Lower Sandgate Road in the rear of their sister battalions of the Brigade.

Some delay ensued, until at last Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell was called forward to confer with the Brigade at the harbour, which was about a mile distant from the point at which the Battalion had halted. Here it was learned that, owing to floating mines having been found near Boulogne Harbour that day, the troops would not be embarked.

Then commenced the ever-celebrated "retreat from Folkestone," the first "retreat" in the history of a brigade that, as the future was to prove, never took kindly to this form of military tactics. It certainly did not on this occasion, but there was nothing else for it. The weary men once more swung on their packs and commenced the uphill march back to Shorncliffe.

It cannot truthfully be said that the "retreat" was carried out "in good order and according to plan." There was no plan; and the men were, by this time, nearing the point of utter exhaustion. On the way back to Sandgate and along the steep ascent to Ross Barracks they fell out by the roadside in scores, and slept where they could, in shelter of hedges or garden walls, or in the dry ditches which bordered the road. Some few lucky ones found quarters for the night in the houses of hospitable civilians, but for the most part "their walls were horizons, their roof was the sky." In the darkness of the sultry night all control was lost; companies, and even battalions, became inextricably mixed; and it was very much a case of every man for himself.

The main body of the Alberta Regiment reached Sir John Moore's Plain, at the summit of the hills behind Sandgate, at 2.00 a.m. on September 17th, after having been on the move for eight

hours in extreme heat. Here the men bivouacked, sleeping in the open between waterproof sheet and great coat. The Fort Garry Horse, stationed at the Cavalry Barracks, extended hospitality to the unit, and looked after the messing arrangements.

Most of the 27th Battalion also bivouacked at Shorncliffe during the night, but the other two units of the Brigade — the 28th and 29th Battalions — did not reach bivouac at all. Presumably they were scattered along the two miles of road between Folkestone and Shorncliffe. During the whole of the morning of September 17th, stragglers of the Winnipeg and Calgary battalions poured into the lines from every point of the compass.

On the late afternoon of September 18th, the men left Shorncliffe for Folkestone, and at 6.15 p.m., the 31st Battalion marched on board the transport "Duchess of Argyll," there being with the unit at the time of embarkation 29 officers and 882 other ranks which, with the advance party, brought the strength up to 32 officers and 991 other ranks. Three men had been left behind in hospital and eleven were absent without leave. The latter, it transpired, had been left behind through ignorance of the hour of sailing, and subsequently rejoined the Battalion in France.

CHAPTER THREE

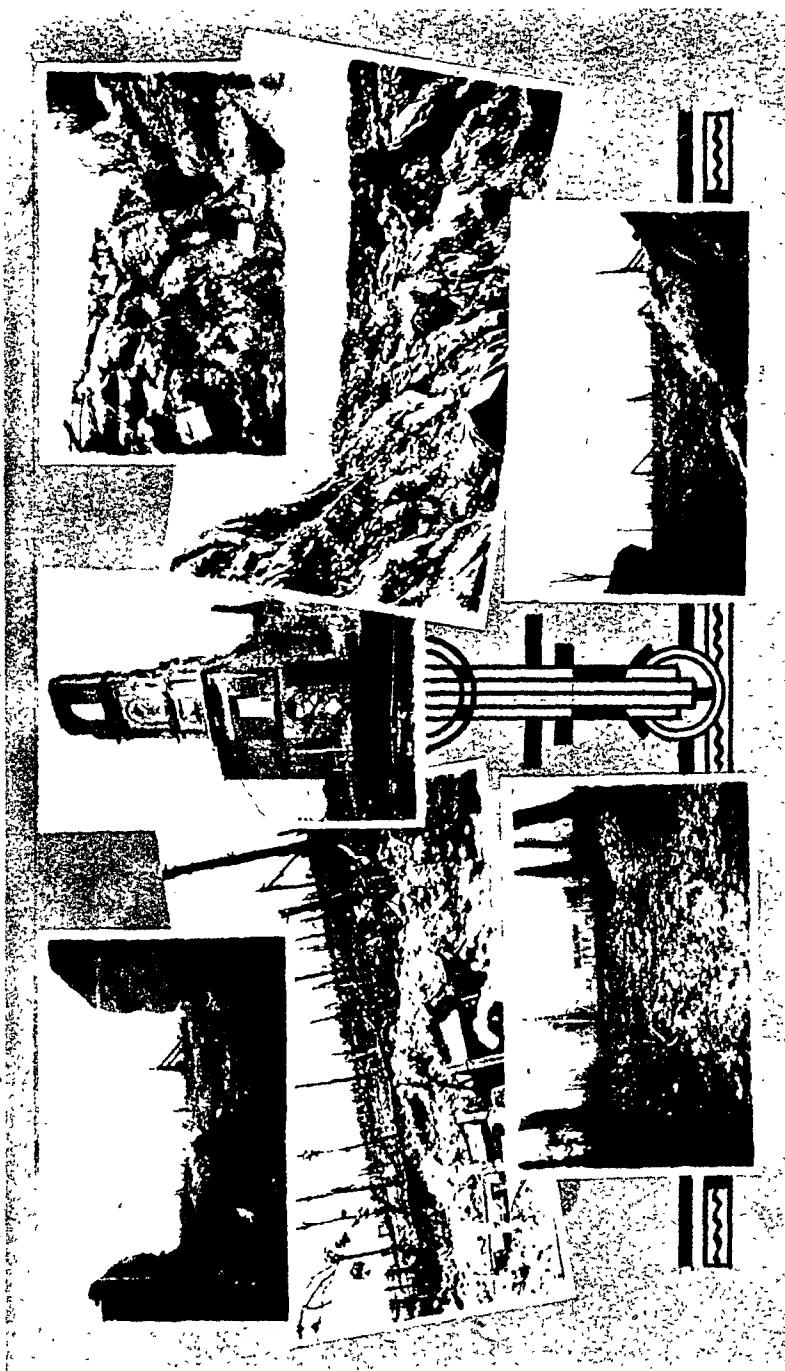
The General War Situation in September, 1915

I.

It may be advisable, before proceeding further with the individual history of the 31st Battalion, to briefly review the general war situation as it existed at the date upon which the unit took its place in the battle line. The war had then been in existence for rather more than thirteen months; and it must be admitted that the Allies had small reason to view the results with any great degree of complacency.

In August, 1914, the German forces, aided by an overwhelming superiority in numbers, in artillery, in machine guns and in munitionment, defeated the Allies in a series of great battles, and came very near to the realization of their plan of forcing a swift decision in the west. This plan was wrecked at the Marne, where the retreating Allied armies turned on the invaders and secured what must be regarded as one of the great decisive victories of history. The second plan of the German General Staff, which involved the capture of the Channel ports and a flank attack on Paris, was frustrated at the First Battle of Ypres, where the stubborn resistance of the British regulars proved too strong to be broken.

The success of the Allies in rendering ineffectual these two primary schemes of the enemy must be entered on the credit side of their ledger of the war. The entries on the debit side, however, far outweighed any credits gained by the Allied forces. As a result of the fighting during the late summer and fall of 1914, the whole of Belgium, except for an insignificant fraction in the extreme west, was in German hands; the rich industrial district of Lille, and the whole of north-eastern France between the Oise and the Meuse, was occupied by the enemy, whose battle front at one point was only thirty miles from the gates of Paris; the invaders had also driven a wedge across the upper Meuse, and the Woevre was in their hands.



Voormezeele Switch Trench
French scene, Sanctuary Wood.
French scene, St. Eloi.

1916.

Scenes at St. Eloi and Sanctuary Wood, 1916.
Voormezeele Church
Voormezeele Chateau, Dickebusch.

Trench, St. Eloi.
Sanctuary Wood, No Man's Land.
Eizenwaale Chateau, Dickebusch.



Against these extensive and valuable territorial gains the Allies could claim only a comparatively unimportant advance into Alsace.

During the following winter the position remained territorially unchanged. Gradually, as the months went by, the war of movement gave place more and more to a state resembling siege warfare on a gigantic scale; and by the spring of 1915 the dead-lock of trench fighting had become firmly established all along the Western Front.

In the meantime, while the principal effort of the enemy had been concentrated upon an attempt to force an early decision in the west, the armies of Russia had scored a number of notable successes in the east, and had pushed their advance far into enemy territory. Russian forces had advanced beyond Warsaw into East Prussia; they had also crossed the Carpathians into Hungary, thereby threatening the fertile corn-producing areas upon which the populations of the Central Powers were so largely dependent for their food supplies. These gains, however, while heartening to the Allies at a time when there was little else to be cheerful about, proved evanescent, and had little effect upon the ultimate course of the war.

In the spring of 1915 the British forces in France commenced to grow in strength, and to take over larger and larger sections of the line. To the original Expeditionary Force had been added units — both white and native — withdrawn from India, while as early as November of the previous year the first Territorial battalions had arrived in France and had since then been steadily increasing in numbers. Early in May, 1915, the first battalions of the New Armies ("Kitchener's Blokes") appeared in the line. At about this time the German General Staff appears to have abandoned all idea of any immediate offensive in the west, and had commenced a great concentration of men and guns against the invading Russians.

At the period in question and, indeed, throughout the year, the enemy possessed a great advantage over the Allies in her overwhelming preponderance of heavy artillery, high-explosive shells and machine guns. At the outbreak of hostilities Germany possessed a strength in land armaments which took the Allies entirely by surprise, while of all the belligerent nations she was the only one industrially organized for war. This enabled her not only

to maintain her reserves of munitions in spite of lavish expenditures, but to increase them.

This condition of affairs rendered it possible for the German General Staff to put into effect its strategy of the summer of 1915. Troops were withdrawn from the Western Front to reinforce the offensive against Russia. In the west the enemy relied upon its elaborate but comparatively thinly-held trench system, its wire entanglements and, above all, its preponderance in artillery and machine guns to hold the inferiorly-munitioned Allied forces. In the east it concentrated every available man and every available gun against the armies of Russia.

Events proved that the German General Staff was justified in thus placing reliance upon the mechanical rather than upon the human element in defensive warfare. During the summer of 1915 the fighting in France and Flanders resolved itself into an immense siege, varied by a number of gallantly executed, extremely expensive and more or less abortive offensives on the part of the Allies. With the exception of the attack upon the Ypres Salient of late April and early May, the enemy forces in the west were content to play a purely defensive part.

Ineffectual and bloody though the Allied offensive operations on the Western Front had been in respect to immediate material advantage, it would be entirely inaccurate to imagine that they had been altogether without beneficial results. As lessons in the principles of modern warfare they were valuable, if somewhat drastic. They proved that, unless the defensive system had first been reduced by intensive shell fire, mere gallantry, superior fighting qualities and greater numbers were useless against prepared positions plentifully supplied with machine guns and supported by strong artillery. They also showed that the preliminary bombardment must be on a wide front to be effectual, since even a complete breach in the enemy lines, unless wide enough to enable troops to manoeuvre without too great an exposure to enfilading fire, was useless.

These gallant failures, and the heavy casualties which they involved, had another far-reaching result. They awakened the civilian populations in the Allied countries to the real seriousness of the situation, and to the necessity of united effort if the war was

to be won. They stressed the urgent need of a vastly increased output of guns and munitions, and in Great Britain prepared public opinion for the formation of the Ministry of Munitions, with its almost arbitrary powers, and the passing of the Munitions Act. The former came into being on June 9th, and the latter was passed into law on July 2nd.

On the other hand the effect of offensive operations carried out during the summer of 1915 was to give the enemy a great advantage in the matter of attrition. The Allied losses in these movements were, in every case, heavy, and were invariably out of all proportion to the results achieved. In addition to this, the fact that the enemy lines were more lightly held than those of the Allies, and that the balance of artillery power was with the invaders, made the casualties inflicted by the daily bombardment of positions much heavier on our own side than on the side of our opponents.

To summarize, it must be admitted that the war in the west, up to the date of entry of the 2nd Canadian Division into the firing line was, on balance, very distinctly in favour of the Central Powers.

II.

While the Allies were, in a measure, holding their own on the Western Front, disaster was overtaking the Russian forces in the east. Here, early in May, Gen. Mackensen had struck with every available man and every available gun; and by the end of the month the Russians were in full retreat towards the River San. In the first assault, which broke the line, the Germans employed over 1,500 guns of all calibres. Against such artillery the forces of the Eastern Empire, great in numbers but badly supplied with munitions and guns, could make no effective resistance. The defence crumbled and the great eastward retreat commenced.

It is not the function of this history to deal in detail with the actions of this great campaign. Blow after blow was struck by the combined armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and beneath them the ill-equipped Russian forces were driven back, with enormous losses of men and war material. On July 1st the fortress of Lemburg fell into German hands; on August 5th, Warsaw was evacuated in good order, most of the civil population

being safely removed from the city, and the retirement being carried out without any great loss of material; Lusk fell on September 1st, and by the end of the month the Russian line had been pushed back to the east of Pinsk. By this time, however, the German effort was exhausting itself, and the lengthening lines of communication tended to check progress. By November the front had stabilized itself in a great curve running from a point on the Baltic in front of Riga almost due east to Kreuzburg, then southward to the west of Dvinsk and onward through the Pripet marshes.

Although it would be foolish to belittle this great eastward thrust of the Central Powers, it is only fair to state that it did not attain its objective. This was nothing less than the complete crushing of the Russian armies in the field. In this the offensive failed. It inflicted enormous casualties; it took vast numbers of prisoners; it captured many guns and much war material, and it gained a great amount of territory. At the end of it all, however, the Russian Army, although badly shaken and greatly weakened, was still a fighting force to be reckoned with.

III.

The failure of the Allies to break the German line in the west, and the overwhelming defeats of the Russian forces, from which such great things had been expected, brought about a marked change in the spirit of the British peoples. There was no weakening of resolution, no faltering of purpose. Such atrocities as the sinking of the "Lusitania" on May 7th, the sporadic attacks of Zeppelins on London and other open towns, and the torpedoing without warning of merchant shipping and trawlers did but harden the determination of the British nations. On the other hand, the first ebullition of high-spirited and careless enthusiasm which had greeted the outbreak of the war had been damped, and had given place to a more sober and a much grimmer state of mind. It was beginning to be realized that the task in front of the Allies was a long and arduous one, and that success could be achieved only at a heavy cost in men and money and material.

The gloom of the summer of 1915 was relieved by one bright gleam of light. On May 23rd, Italy declared war on Austria, and in doing so ranged herself on the side of the Allies. This meant an

immediate accession of strength of nearly a million trained men, together with a useful complement of 75 mm. field guns and Krupp howitzers. In addition to this the Italian Navy was superior in strength to that of Austria, and was able to relieve the Allied navies of the duty of guarding the Adriatic and the neighbouring waters of the Mediterranean.

The augmentation of Allied strength due to the Italian intervention was offset, to a large extent, by the diversion of British forces to the deplorable adventure in Gallipoli. This campaign had a sound basis in strategy. Had it been successful it would have opened up a much-needed sea route for the munitionment of the Russian armies and a water outlet for the grain supplies so greatly needed by the Allied nations. It would, moreover, have constituted a means of flank attack upon the forces of the Central Powers at a time when any hope of forcing a frontal decision seemed hopeless. The whole operation was, however, as ill-conceived and foolishly executed an adventure as any during the war, and reflected anything but credit on those who planned it. It was advertised by a preliminary naval bombardment, and was attempted with forces entirely inadequate to the requirements of the situation. It ended in complete failure—a failure for which the Allies paid dearly in men and munitions and ships of war.

Unencouraging though the war situation was in the fall of 1915 by land, at sea conditions were entirely different. The British Navy was supreme, and had swept German shipping, naval and mercantile, from the face of the oceans. The German high-seas fleet had been forced into hiding behind its mine fields, and dared not venture forth. The submarine campaign had not become, as yet, a serious menace to shipping. British transports, hospital ships, freighters and ocean liners sailed the seas practically without restriction and without material increase in the ordinary risks of sea-borne traffic. The blockade of Germany was, moreover, as complete as the tender regard of the British Government for the rights of profit-seeking neutral nations would permit the navy to make it; and it is not, perhaps, overstating the case when it is said that if any one factor played a bigger part in the winning of the war than any other, that factor was the British battle fleet. Its mere presence held the powerful German Navy to its bases, and enabled

the maritime transport of the Allies—military and mercantile—to sail without danger of molestation from surface craft. It also prevented the movement by sea of German troops, and in so doing protected the flanks of the Allied lines in France from being turned by a landing in strength of enemy forces at the Channel ports.

IV.

At the date of the arrival of the 2nd Canadian Division in France the situation on the Western Front had not materially changed from that of the previous winter. All along the front the state of trench warfare was firmly established. The opposing trenches ran in an unbroken line from the Channel to the Alps. The Allies had constructed a system consisting of first, second and third line trenches, protected by elaborate systems of barbed-wire entanglements. Behind these, at intervals, were other prepared positions and strong points from which the advancing enemy could be enfiladed in the event of a break-through.

The three main trench lines were fed by numerous communication trenches running from the front line back into the hinterland, sometimes for a distance of nearly five miles. These communication trenches linked the fighting line with its reserves and its base, and provided the channels by means of which troops entered and left the main trenches, and along which munitions and supplies were brought up from the rear.

Behind the trenches, at every point of vantage, were the gun pits and gun positions. These were screened, as far as circumstances permitted, from the observation of enemy aircraft, but it was impossible to conceal the stabbing flash of the discharge. The gun positions were connected by telephone to observation posts further forward. These posts were established at any available point from which a clear field of vision of the enemy positions could be obtained. Sometimes they were in or near the front line trenches, sometimes further back, and occasionally even in front of the firing line.

The German defence system was similar in its main features to that of the Allies, but it was more elaborate and, on the average, deeper from front to rear. When the German General Staff decided

to strengthen its eastern drive by withdrawing troops from the west, everything that military ingenuity could suggest, and unremitting labour achieve, to strengthen the western line and make it impregnable was done. In addition to the main trench lines supported by many strong points, the works were further strengthened by great redoubts consisting of labyrinths of trenches and machine-gun stations almost flush with the ground. Every natural feature of the landscape which would serve the purpose was converted into a field fortification, and the whole line bristled with machine guns.

In some parts of the line the opposing fire trenches were little more than a score of yards apart; in others from two or three hundred yards of shell-torn ground, festooned with wire and often littered with unburied dead, separated them. Back of the line on either side was the desolated and crater-pitted countryside, dotted with the ruins of once-prosperous homesteads, the wrecked remains of villages and the torn and splintered trunks of trees.

By the time the 2nd Canadian Division arrived in France the British forces in the field had been materially increased. In addition to strong detachments from India, nine divisions of the new armies and a large number of Territorial battalions had taken their place in the field. The latter had already been organized into divisions. The famous Guards Division had also just been formed and was ready for action.

The situation in respect to guns and, to a less extent, ammunition, had also materially improved. By the end of September over a thousand British factories employing upwards of a million men had been taken under Government control; and the six thousand guns of every calibre massed by the enemy along the Western Front were matched by approximately the same number on the side of the Allies. The Germans were still in command of a much larger supply of shells, and could, therefore, expend them more lavishly; but by rationing the guns the Allies had been able to build up a substantial accumulation of ammunition. On the whole, although the need for more guns and a greatly increased supply of shells was still urgent, it may be said that the worst of the crisis in this regard had been overcome.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Flanders

I.

The 31st Battalion arrived at 9:30 p.m. on September 18th, disembarked immediately, and set out on the uphill march of two miles to Ostrohove Camp, where the men spent the night. On the following morning, immediately after breakfast, iron rations were issued and at 9.15 a.m. the Battalion marched for Boulogne, where it entrained for St. Omer. The journey was slow and wearisome, as is usual with troop trains in France, and there was a long delay at St. Omer before the train resumed its journey to Cassel. Here the Battalion detrained, and commenced the eight-mile march to Weexten Farm, near St. Sylvester Cappelle, which it reached at about six o'clock in the evening.

From the east the continual rumble of the guns could be distinctly heard. All along the Western Front the Allied artillery was carrying out a general bombardment, and at a distance the individual concussions were blended into a continual mutter not unlike the sound of distant thunder. It brought home with considerable vividness to those who heard it their nearness to the scene of conflict and of death; and it is doubtful if any, listening to this ominous sound for the first time, did so without some quickening of the pulse or some shadow of fear for the unknown future.

Throughout the following morning, September 20th, the men relaxed and cleaned equipment, and in the afternoon the companies went into training. On September 21st the Brigade was inspected by Gen. Sir H. C. O. Plumer, Commander of the Second Army; Lieut.-Gen. E. A. H. Alderson, the Canadian Corps Commander, and Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner, in command of the 2nd Canadian Division, the staffs of the Corps, Division and Brigade being present. On the morning of the following day the Division proceeded by route march to Westhoef Farm, near Neuve Eglise, fourteen miles nearer

the line. Bailleul, headquarters of the Canadian Corps, was passed en route at 2.30 p.m., and Lieut.-Gen. Alderson took the salute as the brigades went through.

Troops of the 1st Canadian Division — veterans of Second Ypres and six and a half months of warfare — lined the last mile or so of the march in, and greeted their new comrades with the usual derisive and unprintable pleasantries. Westoeuf Farm (Aldershot Shelters) was eventually reached at 4.30 p.m. Here more than half the men had to bivouac owing to lack of accommodation, and considerable difficulty was experienced in finding water fit for drinking.

During the next three days interest centred chiefly upon demonstrations of, and drill with, the smoke helmet which had been adopted as a protection against poison gas. This was a somewhat primitive affair compared with the improved gas masks which followed later, and it was not received with any marked enthusiasm by the men. It took the form of a sack with a nipple through which to exhale, and a clip to squeeze the nose. It had glass eyelets which tended to dim with the condensed breath of the wearer, and was altogether neither easy to breathe through nor comfortable to wear.

On September 25th news was received of the Allied offensive which had been launched that morning. Two days earlier the main bombardments had commenced along the "Castelnau" sector Bassee, Givenchy, Neuve Chapelle, Bois Grenier and the Ypres Salient. These bombardments, particularly in Champagne and between La Bassee and Arras, were by far the heaviest and most thorough attempted by the Allies up to the date in question. For two days along these fronts hundreds of guns of all calibres had thundered continuously, and hundreds of thousands of shells had ploughed and churned the countryside along many miles of front. The enemy advanced positions were practically obliterated, and the second line trenches breached and badly damaged. At Givenchy, Neuve Chapelle, Bois Grénier and Ypres the bombardment was less intensive, as the attacks at these points were holding battles rather than serious attempts to break through. Their object was to prevent enemy troops from being withdrawn from the line to rein-

force the defence at the points where the main thrusts were being made, and in this they were successful.

The infantry attacks were delivered on the morning of September 25th. In Champagne the French advance averaged nearly two and a half miles on a front of fifteen miles on the first day, upward of 150 guns were captured and approximately 20,000 unwounded prisoners were taken. Practically the whole of the German front line positions were occupied, and the French held long sectors of the second line as well; but the German defences had not been pierced.

The main British attack, delivered along the front La Bassee-Hulluch-Loos was equally successful, and had sufficient reserves been available to support the irresistible impetus of the first rush the German lines might have been broken and a major victory achieved. As it was Loos was captured, and the advance swept on beyond the village to the crest of Hill 70.

On the evening of the day of these attacks the 2nd Canadian Division was paraded before General Alderson in half-brigades. The Corps Commander addressed the men, giving them such details as were then available of the progress of the several offensives. He also informed them that the 3rd Canadian Brigade was to be taken out of the line in front of Kemmel and sent to reinforce the 75th British Infantry Brigade, and that the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade had been selected to take its place in the line. This announcement, following the heartening news of the Allied successes, was greeted with cheers. At last the Brigade was to play the part for which it had been preparing throughout nearly a year of strenuous training.

It was 9.00 p.m. when, after much delay, the 31st Battalion moved slowly out from Aldershot Shelters en route for Kemmel and the line. The night was extremely dark, and rain, driven by a cold wind, was falling steadily. Pack mules and a single wagon for the machine guns, constituted the only transport.

About this first, slow, cautious approach of the men of Alberta to the firing line there brooded an atmosphere of mystery and eeriness, a spirit almost of tragedy, invoked by the strangeness of the environment and the circumstances of the march. The enshrouding gloom, the persistent rain, the silence in which the

slowly moving column advanced, the muddy, crater-pitted desolation of the surrounding terrain, the ignorance of the men of their own position and that of the enemy, all contributed to the sense of nightmare unreality which accompanied the marching men.

Smoking was prohibited, and halts were made at frequent intervals to allow the Battalion Scouts to reconnoitre the path ahead. The men, under the impression that they were near to the enemy positions, were kept in that state of continual tension which anticipates every moment catastrophic events which fail to materialize. From time to time they saw other troops moving about in twos and threes, and were astounded to observe that these men were smoking and talking without any effort at concealment. It subsequently transpired that the 31st Battalion had been moving parallel to the line, and was still a long way back of the forward British positions, and that all the exaggerated caution of the early part of the march had been quite unnecessary.

Thus, slowly and tediously, the men of the Alberta Regiment with their comrades of the 28th and 29th Battalions advanced, for the first time, towards the forward area. The last named units went forward to the first-line trenches. Two platoons of A Company of the 31st Battalion were detached to support the 29th on the right, while the other two were allocated to the 28th Battalion on the left. The remainder of the 31st proceeded to Kemmel Shelters, while the 27th Battalion lay in reserve at Locre.

The positions in which the 6th Brigade found itself in these last days of September, and in which it was destined to spend the next six months, were located on the lower slopes of Wytschaete Ridge, in Flanders. The country throughout this district consists, for the most part, of a rich alluvial plain of red and loamy clay soil. The coast line rises very little above sea level, and at places the plain is actually below it, and has to be protected by dykes from invasion by the waters of the North Sea. The country is threaded by a number of streams and small rivers. These provide a system of underground seepage, which undoubtedly caused the water-logged condition of the trêches at St. Eloi and Passchendaele. The level of this plain is broken near its centre by a ring of cone-shaped sand hills. These hills begin near Cassel, about thirty miles to the south of Dunkirk. From this point they form a crescent-shaped

barrier that passes through Bailleul, south past Ypres, and then north-east to Roulers. Cassel is the highest point in this range of hills, which rises in this neighbourhood to a height of nearly 1,000 feet above the general level of the plains. Looking from these heights the blunted heads of Mount Kemmel, Mont de Cats, Messines Ridge and the series of hills south and east, including Hill 60, Klein Zillebeke, Gravenstafel and the Passchendaele Ridge rise from the plain.

The principal characteristic of that part of the line allocated to the 2nd Canadian Division was its deep and omnipresent mud. In this respect it had no monopoly, and was little better and little worse than scores of miles of front in this area. The fact that the Canadian positions were not unique in this regard in no wise detracted, however, from the hardships and discomfort and depression of spirit incidental to a life spent in a desolation of slime and water.

The trench system, if the mud-filled excavations which formed parts of the line are worthy of such designation, followed in general the plan already outlined. In addition to the trenches, the defensive system included a number of strong points numbered S.P. 9, S.P. 10, S.P. 11 and so on. In the line itself there were several small salients of evil fame, notably the "Bull Ring" and the "Glory Hole," which were never really popular with the troops detailed to garrison them.

Running rearward from the line were a number of communication trenches — Vigo Street, Regent Street, Pall Mall, Via Gellia — inappropriate names which are still remembered by many whose evil fortune it was to carry rations and supplies down their muddy length during the autumn of 1915. Later in the year the continuous rains obliterated many of these trenches, and communication with the rear had to be carried out by way of the occasional roads which crossed the country from east to west. Here men passing back and forth were exposed to enemy fire, and movement was possible only under cover of darkness. Even at midnight, in these exposed places, men had to run the gauntlet of stray bullets or bursts of machine-gun fire, and the sudden, betraying glare of flares sent up from the enemy lines. Few walked for pleasure along these Flemish roads, and few will remember with regret the Lindenhoek Road, Suicide Road, V. C. Road and the pave at Parrave Farm.

Earlier in the war the country in the neighbourhood of Kemmel had witnessed some severe fighting, evidence of which could still be seen in "No Man's Land," where decaying corpses littered the ground. At first the Germans had advanced far into Belgium along this sector, only to be driven back again, pursued by British cavalry. Once more the Germans had advanced upon Kemmel, the line eventually stabilizing itself upon the positions occupied when the 6th Canadian Brigade first entered the trenches.

A somewhat vivid commentary on the gruesomeness of war is presented in the description of these relics of bygone battles by Pte. Don Fraser, of the 31st Battalion, who writes as follows:

"When on sentry duty at G3 on the morning of November 2nd, I was surprised to see a couple of fellows in 'No Man's Land' bending over something. It was foggy at the time and extreme vision was about 90 yards. At the moment I thought they were Germans and was just on the point of covering them, when I saw they were our own men. Being curious, and my sentry period just up, I went over the parapet to see what was the matter. It was a dead Gordon Highlander, and they were going through his clothes gingerly. A few yards away were some more dead. We found out later that there was a fairly even line of dead three to four hundred yards long, principally Gordon Highlanders, though there were a few evidently belonging to an English regiment. Most of the bodies were skeletons, or nearly so, and fell to pieces when moved. Some were partly buried. One Highlander was fairly intact. On two of them we found pay books, watches, and some money. Their names were Robb and Anderson and they belonged to Aberdeen, Scotland. Robb was married and had several letters in his possession. One was written by himself to his wife — and of course was never posted. It was dated December, 1914. He was very optimistic regarding the war, and even went so far as to say that it would be finished in a week or two, and that he expected to be home by Christmas. His paybook had one entry, a payment made in October. He was clothed in winter garb and had his equipment over a light coloured goatskin coat. He was lying facing the German line and his rifle with bayonet fixed lay about a foot to his right. One could con-

jecture what had happened, seeing the bodies were in a row and equidistant. Roughly there were about 150 of them. Piecing things together, I concluded that they had received an order to charge. Moving forward in extended order they only got about fifty yards into 'No Man's Land,' when a slow traversing machine-gun fire opened up and killed them on the run. I took a clip of shells out of the pouches of the equipment of one of them and brought in his rifle and bayonet. The rifle I gave to Cpl. Still and the bayonet to Macnair. Notwithstanding that the rifle had been lying there for ten months, in less than half an hour's cleaning Still fired a shot through it. It was an astonishing exhibition of the serviceability of the little British rifle. A few weeks later, glancing over the 'Glasgow Herald,' which was sent to me by my sister, I was surprised to see under the obituary announcements the names of Robb and Anderson, 'formerly missing, now killed.'

"These bodies in 'No Man's Land,' also remains of Frenchmen in front of the 'F's' and one of the 'F' support lines, jumbled amidst their blue clothing and cowhide packs, made me interested in the history of the line, and I made enquiries about the former occupants of this part, but nobody knew anything definite, save that the 16th Canadian Scottish were here before us. On a few sandbags and on woodwork in dugouts, names of English soldiers were pencilled or carved.

"A few months later, when further north in the 'M' and 'N' trenches, I came across a Jock who was one of the sappers there and was busily engaged tunneling under Fritz's line, which was ultimately blown when Messines Ridge was captured on June 7th, 1917. It turned out that he belonged to the battalion of Gordons, whose dead were strewn in front of G3. He told me that they had made an unsuccessful charge and were cleaned up by machine-gun fire. I learned something more about this fight when I was in hospital in Birmingham. A convoy of wounded and sick arrived from the Salonica front, and the fellow taken to the vacant bed on my left was a member of the Royal Scots. He was out in France at the beginning of the war, when only 15 years of age. His battalion, the 2nd Royal Scots, went over the top on the same day as the High-

landers. The Gordons were wiped out, but the Royal Scots captured the German trench.

"Next morning, being misty, a number of the 25th Battalion on our left, with a few of our own men, including the writer, went over into 'No Man's Land' in quest of more bodies. Going further in we came across some more Gordons, also I presume a Middlesex man. He had his khaki overcoat on. They were not in a good state of preservation, skulls separate, bones broken, and so forth. Several minutes after coming in I heard that three of the 25th fellows had been fired at, that two were killed and one wounded."

II.

For the men of the 6th Brigade, new as they were to the stark realities of war, and wet to the skin, there was little sleep during their first night in the forward area. They were, for the first time, within range of the enemy's guns and reach of sudden death, and few sleep soundly the first night under such unusual circumstances.

The next day further news came through of the progress of the Allied offensives. That of the French attack was encouraging, the advance of the previous day having been continued and the great camp of Sadowa, with large quantities of war material, having been captured. From the British front the news was not so good. The initial advance, unsupported as it was by adequate reserves, had been carried too far. The Germans had counter-attacked strongly, and heavy fighting was taking place from Hill 70 to Hulluch. Some of the ground gained on the previous day had been lost.

On September 27th the weather cleared somewhat, and permitted the men to dry themselves out to some extent. During the early morning the machine guns of the Battalion were sent forward to the platoons of A Company. This Company occupied a position at Nieuport Dugouts just under Kemmel Hill, the best observation post in Belgium, overlooking both the British and the German lines. On the same day a fatigue party of A Company, consisting of Nos. 3 and 4 Platoons, was sent forward to the front line trenches; these were the first men of the 31st Battalion to come under shell fire.

At 4.00 p.m. on September 30th, the 31st Battalion commenced its forward move to take over the sector of the front line trenches

from the 28th Battalion. As the unit advanced the German artillery opened up on the left, and the troops moving forward from the ridge could discern the flashes from behind the enemy positions, while overhead flare after flare rose far into the sky, fell and died out, illuminating with their livid light the shell-torn ground.

The relief was completed quickly, quietly and without confusion, and before ten o'clock the men had settled down for the night. There was no fuss, and whatever the secret emotions of the men may have been, no visible excitement. All ranks carried out their allotted work expeditiously. A few officers and N. C. O.'s of the 28th Battalion remained in the line until noon of the following day to assist the newly arrived unit in taking over its duties.

Owing to the recent heavy rains, the trenches were very muddy, and were anything but comfortable as a result. They were, moreover, in poor condition in many parts, and badly in need of repair.

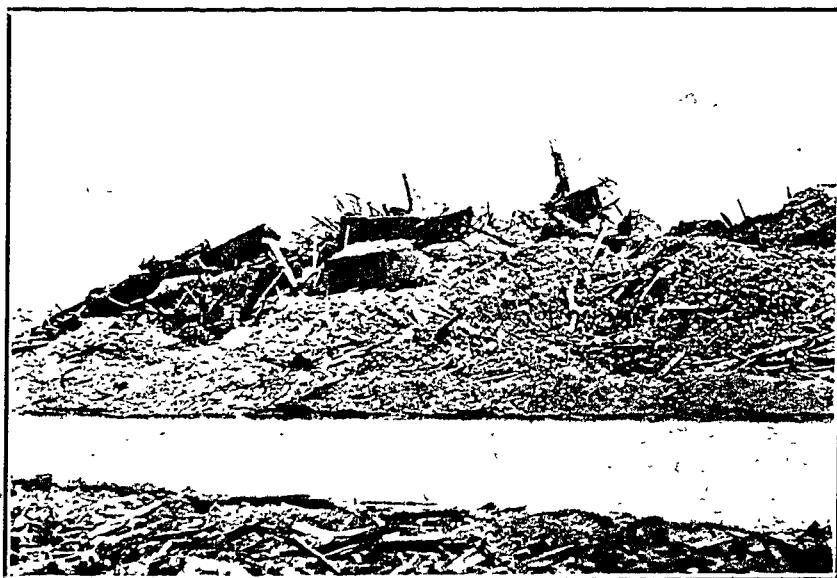
October 1st, the Battalion's first day in the firing line, was quiet. The men were occupied in constructing dugouts and repairing the parapet. Early in the day the enemy commenced a bombardment of the positions held by the 24th Battalion on the left, and shortly after noon blew a mine in front of the line held by B Company of the 31st Battalion. This was fortunately short, however, and did little damage. As darkness settled down, Major Splane's men of A Company surprised an enemy working party and opened fire on it, inflicting casualties. The Battalion had drawn first blood.

An unfortunate accident occurred on October 3rd which cast a gloom over D Company, the men being still unused to witnessing the death of their comrades. A sniper-scope was being fixed to the rifle of Pte. I. L. Nuttall when the rifle was accidentally discharged and the bullet penetrated his heart.

During the next few days the enemy bombarded the trenches in a mild way, while the rain continued to fall in increasing torrents. On the last day of their first tour of the trenches four men of the Battalion were wounded, Pte. Lowe of A Company having his face badly lacerated and his sight destroyed, and three men in D Company being slightly wounded. At 7.00 p.m., on October 6th, the unit commenced to move out of the trenches, being relieved by the 28th Battalion. Three hours later the change over had been completed. The 31st Battalion proceeded to divisional reserve at Locre, where



"A" Company, training in Calgary.



Remains of Sugar Factory, Courcelette (Arras-Bapaume Road in foreground).



the men had a hot meal before proceeding to rest billets and hutments.

Judged by general standards, the first spell of the Battalion in the front line had been a quiet one, and in this the unit was fortunate. Green infantry, under fire for the first time, strange to the sight of death and mutilation and blood, unused to the continual bursting of shells and as yet unaware of how little actual damage a shell-burst may do, are liable to be somewhat daunted if their first spell in the trenches is really strenuous, and may suffer a loss of morale which takes long to overcome. In the case of the 31st Battalion, however, there was no question of this. The men had gained the experience of being shelled, but it had not been a severe shelling; they had been under fire for six days and nights, and had learned what it meant; and the unit had come out with one man accidentally killed and five wounded — one casualty per day. The men had undergone their initiation, and had come through well.

III.

The first day in divisional reserve at Locre was spent in resting and in cleaning equipment, and on the following day the unit went into training. In the afternoon all ranks availed themselves of the opportunity of taking a bath — the first since leaving England three weeks earlier.

On Tuesday, October 12th, the 31st Battalion once more moved into the line, where they again took over the trenches they had previously occupied, relieving the 28th Battalion. At midnight, and again at 1.30 and at 3.00 a.m. green rockets were sent up from the lines held by the unit. These drew heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from the enemy positions. The rockets, the purpose of which was to lead the opposing forces to believe that an attack was in course of preparation and thus prevent the dispatch of troops to the Hulluch area, where the British were preparing a minor offensive, were apparently successful in the attainment of their object. All night bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire from the enemy positions testified to the nervous condition of the men holding them.

The delusion of an impending attack was elaborated on the following day. At 2.00 p.m. the artillery behind the lines held by

the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade opened an intensive bombardment of the enemy positions. Within sixteen minutes the enemy guns had commenced to retaliate, bombarding the Canadian lines with shrapnel and high-explosive shells. Great clouds of smoke and spouting columns of earth shot skyward from the red flashes of the bursting projectiles, while sudden whitish puffs of smoke, slowly spreading and diffusing against the sky, marked the explosions of the shrapnel in front of and over the trenches. For a while pandemonium was loosed over the opposing lines, the artillery fire on both sides being extremely severe.

At 3.30 p.m., smoke bombs were fired from the trenches held by the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, accompanied by the sudden crackle of rifle fire and the stammering of the machine guns. Officers shouted mock orders, and bayonets were fixed and lifted to show above the parapet. Almost immediately the enemy sent up two dense columns of smoke, as if in signal, and brought heavy machine-gun and artillery fire to bear upon the Canadian position.

The men of the 31st Battalion had not fired more than fifteen rounds before no fewer than 138 of their Ross rifles jammed. This weapon, excellent as it was for range work and as a sporting rifle, was found to be altogether unsuitable for the conditions in the trenches. A little mud or grit in the delicate mechanism of the bolt and breech-lock caused the rifle to jam, and rendered it temporarily useless. Had the enemy attacked at this particular juncture it might have been serious, as many of the men would have had to rely on the bayonet only to repel the assault.

The enemy artillery fire was both heavy and accurate. Huge gaps began to appear in the parapets of the trenches held by the Canadians, and the toll of casualties commenced to mount up. One shell, bursting on the parados of the trenches occupied by the 31st Battalion, buried some men in the falling earth. Lieut. P. G. Tofft saw the collapse of the parados and, calling to some of his men for assistance, ran to the scene of the occurrence. He had barely reached the spot, however, when another shell burst in the trench, killing him and five other ranks. Soon after this the dugout housing the signallers caved in, burying the operators. The men were badly shaken by the explosion, but were not seriously hurt, and managed to extricate themselves and to have the signal station in working order in seven minutes. Meanwhile D Company lines were

crumbling under heavy shell fire, and later Major P. J. Daly had to use all his men to repair the damage under cover of darkness. It proved to be an all-night job.

About 5.00 p.m. the enemy's shell fire died down, and it began to look as though matters had come to a temporary conclusion. After a lull of ten minutes or so, however, the Germans appeared to grow very nervous again, and opened up with every gun they could muster against the Brigade lines. Shell after shell crashed into the firing and support trenches, and into the rear; gap after gap appeared in the parapets; and between the crashes of the exploding shells could be heard the chatter of the machine guns.

After some fifteen minutes the Allied artillery came into action, carrying out some effective counter-battery work under which the enemy fire gradually died down.

This demonstration on the front of the Canadian Corps was successful. At the cost of comparatively few casualties it kept the enemy on the qui vive for nearly twenty-four hours, and during that period prevented the withdrawal of reserves from the opposing lines. It cost the 31st Battalion one officer and nine other ranks killed, and seventeen wounded; but in compensation it gave the unit valuable experience of holding on under heavy shelling. The men behaved splendidly throughout, and in their bearing gave promise of that valour and hardihood which were destined to win for them so enviable a reputation in the much more terrible ordeals which lay ahead.

Later the Battalion buried its dead.

On both sides the artillery maintained a fitful fire; the stabbing flashes of the guns, the redder flames of the bursting shells, flickered in the wet darkness. Against the cloud-veiled sky rockets rose from time to time, flared for a moment, and died.

The crash of neighbouring guns and the nearer detonations of exploding shells punctuated the rumble of more distant artillery. The occasional stutter of a burst of machine-gun fire and the whine of bullets passing overhead made up a diminuendo in the chorus of war which had filled the recent hours.

In the fire-bays the sentries fidgeted, stamping their feet in an effort to keep warm. In the trench men waited, leaning on their shovels and listening to the solemn words of the burial service.

Is there anything more impressive in the world, to those who hear it for the first time, than a burial service on the field of battle? It is not only that the dead have been their comrades and their friends; in addition to this there is the close personal application. Any one of those that stand bare-headed at the grave side and listen with living ears to the sacred ritual may be himself the next to follow those who have blazed the trail.

Custom stale, and after a little while all such things lose their significance. Burials become a daily occurrence — a mere matter of routine. In the same way sights which at first caused physical ~~shock~~ sea by their sheer ghastliness are seen and passed over without a second thought. In the fierce furnace of war the finer sensibilities are tempered and toughened, and the whole personality must, of necessity, become inured to things that would once have greatly moved it.

The service ended. Earth was thrown over the blanket-draped forms, and the shell hole where they had met their death became their grave. There they were laid together, the first of the Battalion to die at the hands of the enemy — Lieut. P. G. Tofft, Cpl. T. Henderson, and Ptes. L. E. Callaghan, S. Sheridan, F. D. McInnes and A. J. Groves.

During the night many attempts were made by the enemy to repair their wire entanglements, which had been badly torn by the bombardment of the previous day; but machine guns and rifle fire drove in his working parties. On the following day four more men, Ptes. A. McDonald, L. G. Harris, F. Goggs and W. McCleary, killed during the bombardment of the day before, were buried in the cemetery north of Kemmel Chateau. These were joined on the following day by Cpl. A. P. Fraser, who was killed in a heavy rifle-grenade bombardment by the enemy, four other men being badly wounded.

On the night of October 18th the unit was again relieved by the 28th Battalion, and went into brigade reserve at Kemmel Shelters. The following day the men visited Loker, where they were afforded the opportunity of another bath, and of getting rid of the stench and filth of the trenches.

IV.

The 31st Battalion had now been in France for a month. In that period it had gone through an initiation into the methods of modern warfare less drastic, perhaps, than that which had fallen to the lot of some units, but none the less effective for that reason. The men had withstood some fairly heavy shell fire, had seen death and had dealt death, and had come through unshaken.

Apart from the "liveliness" occasioned by the holding demonstration of the Canadian Corps, the sector in which the Battalion had found itself must be regarded as having been tranquil. — In the meantime, however, heavy fighting had taken place at other points on the Western Front, and events had moved forward in other theatres of war.

In Champagne the French had followed up their great thrusts of September 25th and 26th by another effort on the 29th. The point chosen for the attack was to the west of Navarin Farm, where the second-line positions of the enemy had already been penetrated. The assault was pressed with great vigour and the German lines were pierced; but the breach was little more than a mile in width — far too narrow for anything approaching a break-through. This battle of Champagne was the greatest of the Allied attempts to smash the enemy front by a single crushing blow. Within limits, it was a success. Over 150 guns and some 25,000 prisoners were taken; but it failed conspicuously in its main purpose.

In Artois the French attack between Grenay and Arras, which synchronized with that in Champagne, had gained ground to an average depth of approximately one mile on a front of about eight miles. Souchez Village had been carried, and French troops had also occupied the north-west side of the Vimy slopes, including the famous Wood of Givenchy — by this time little more than a shell-pitted mass of splinters. Vimy Ridge, however, had not been won.

The simultaneous attack of the British further north, between Grenay and La Bassee, had been carried out with the utmost vigour and gallantry, and had come within an ace of breaking the German front. This offensive, like that of the French to the south, was intended primarily as a holding battle to divert reserves which might otherwise have been sent to oppose the main French thrust in

Champagne. Both attacks had also the secondary objective of occupying the high ground commanding the railway junction at Lens; but neither offensive had, as its primary aim, the breaking of the enemy front. Had it not been for this fact the British might have scored a major success, and have shaken the whole of the German line in the west. If the artillery preparation had been on a more ambitious scale, and if reserves had been available in numbers compatible with the considered plan of breaking the line, there is every reason to believe that the British might have gone clean through.

In the actual event, the success achieved was substantial. On a front of 6,500 yards, the British had carried the enemy first line, and had broken into the second at many points. Twenty-six field guns and forty machine guns had been taken, together with large quantities of war material and about 3,100 prisoners. Loos had been occupied; and when the initial counter-attacks had expended themselves the western part of Hill 70 to the east of Loos and all the western portion of Hill 69, including the famous Hohenzollern Redoubt, remained in British hands.

Meanwhile in the Balkans events had been moving fast, and the situation of Serbia had become desperate. As early as August enemy units had commenced to disappear from the Russian front, and a growing concentration of hostile troops had been reported north of the Danube. On September 19th the first batteries opened fire on Belgrade.

On October 5th Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, and in so doing sounded the death-knell of Serbia. The front of the Serbian Army was along the River Danube, which formed the northern border of the country, dividing it from Hungary. Along this front the valiant army, reduced to some 200,000 rifles by the heavy and victorious fighting earlier in the war, was facing a combined German and Austro-Hungarian force greatly superior in artillery power and munitionment, and at least its equal in numbers. The eastern boundary of the country, separating it from Bulgaria, was virtually undefended; and the Bulgarians, crossing this frontier, were able to attack the unprotected Serbian right flank. Taken thus in front and flank by greatly superior forces, the doom of our Balkan Ally was sealed.

Bulgaria, at the time of her entry into the war, had a field army of 300,000 men, and was already fully mobilized. In addition she possessed Territorial and other reserves to the number of 60,000. Her artillery consisted of 135 field batteries and 15 batteries of 4.7 inch howitzers. Some of the field guns were not, however, of the quick-firing type, and her artillery power on the whole was not up to the standard required by modern war. In spite of this, however, the Bulgarian forces made a very valuable contribution to the overtaxed resources of the Central Powers.

Bulgarian intervention had, moreover, a much greater significance to the enemy than a mere accession of fighting strength. It meant the inevitable crushing of Serbia, and the consequent clearing of the Danube route between the Central Powers and Turkey. This would greatly facilitate the munitionment of the Turks, and would render possible the withdrawal of Turkish troops from her own frontiers to assist her allies in other parts of Europe should this be found desirable.

Following the opening of hostilities by Bulgaria, events moved rapidly and, for Serbia, disastrously. On October 7th, General Mackensen forced the lines of the Danube and the Sava, and two days later Belgrade, the Serbian capital, fell; two Bulgarian armies were on the eastern frontier of that unhappy country, and Turkish troops were over the Thracian borders, and around Dedeagatch. The over-running of Serbia had commenced.

Far to the south, at Salonika, some 13,000 French and British troops, which had been withdrawn from Gallipoli, represented the belated, forlorn and futile effort of the Allies to rescue Serbia from her inevitable doom. The withdrawal of these troops from the Peninsula had, moreover, marked the beginning of the end of the ill-planned and ill-fated Dardanelles adventure, the failure of which was, by this time, a matter of complete certainty. The only remaining question in connection with Gallipoli was whether it would be possible to extricate our troops from the difficult position in which they were placed without enormous losses. That the withdrawal was eventually accomplished in good order and without unduly heavy casualties reflects great credit on the Allied generalship and staff work; and affords the one redeeming feature in a deplorable fiasco.

While these events were transpiring on the Western Front and in the Balkans there had also been some heavy fighting in the eastern area. In the north the Germans had launched offensives against Dvinsk and Riga, the objective of which was the line of the River Dvina. Successive attacks, delivered with great energy and determination, all failed, and the Russians maintained their ground along the banks of the river. The Germans gained some territory at the cost of heavy casualties, but entirely failed in their main purpose.

V.

The 31st Battalion was due back in the line on the night of October 24th. Before going in two scouts from D Company, Pte. J. King and Pte. W. R. Elliott, were sent forward to investigate a machine-gun post which was causing trouble in the sector the unit was to occupy.

Rain fell in torrents as the Battalion took over its section of the front. The trenches were in an indescribable condition, and were hourly becoming worse in the driving rain. The night, however, passed quietly, except for occasional bursts of enemy machine-gun fire. There was no sign of the two scouts who had gone out on the previous evening; nor did the morning bring any news of the missing men, concerning whom anxiety was beginning to be felt. Throughout the day men listened and watched in vain for their two comrades, and by evening hope of their safety was given up. It seemed evident that they had either been killed or taken prisoner.

Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner visited the lines during the day, and conferred with battalion officers upon the condition of the trenches. Under the pitiless and continual rain these were rapidly becoming quite unmanageable. As fast as the men rebuilt the crumbling and water-logged parapet, it slipped back again into the trenches. The dugouts were rapidly filling with water, and most of them had become quite uninhabitable. Sump holes had overflowed, latrines had drained their sewerage into communication trenches and all efforts to get rid of the water had proved unavailing. Shell holes in front of and behind the lines were full of water, and "No Man's Land"—that stretch of neutral ground between the opposing trenches—had become a quagmire pitted with the muddy pools of craters.

The night of October 25th passed as the preceding night had passed. Except for bursts of machine-gun and rifle fire everything was quiet. The rain continued, and the discomfort of the men became acute. There was still no sign of the missing scouts, concerning whom all hope had been abandoned. It was not until ten o'clock on the following night that a sentry, looking out across the morass-like front, observed the figure of a man stumbling painfully through the mud. He hailed, and was answered, and a minute later Pte. King dropped exhausted into the trench. An hour later Pte. Elliott also managed to reach the lines.

It transpired that the two scouts had been seen by the enemy on the night they went out, who had promptly opened fire on them with machine guns. The men had been compelled to take cover in a shell hole and dig themselves in. Throughout the night burst after burst of machine-gun fire had pinned them down in their shelter, and the same thing had happened on the following night. For over forty-eight hours they had been penned up in that water-logged shell hole, cold, wet and hungry, waiting for a chance to return to their own lines.

On October 27th fifty men, representing every company and specialist section of the Battalion, proceeded to Loco under command of Major L. H. Dawson for a special inspection by the King. Similar detachments were also withdrawn from the 27th, 28th and 29th Battalions. The persistent and merciless rain was still pouring down when the men left the trenches, and the road was choked with mud. It was still raining when the men took up their positions on the miry parade ground in front of the baths of Loco; and it was a muddy, soaked and bedraggled body of men which the King inspected that day. His Majesty was accompanied by Field Marshal Sir John French, General Officer Commanding the British forces in the field, and by members of his Staff.

Owing to the persistent rain the condition of the trenches was becoming hourly more and more deplorable. Conferences were held, and Major-Gen. Turner visited the line at frequent intervals to observe the condition and try to discover some remedy. Since drainage was impossible, however, owing to the fact that there was no lower ground to which the water could be drained, nothing useful could be done. The one bright spot in an otherwise dismal prospect

was afforded by the happy thought that the enemy was probably as harassed and drenched as were our own men.

This tour of the Battalion in the trenches was quiet, but exceedingly uncomfortable. During the whole of the six days the men had been wet to the skin, and had wallowed in muddy water which was, in places, more than knee deep; every hour of the day and night had been occupied in an endeavour to shovel the collapsing parapet and parados out of the trenches into the place where they belonged; rations had been sodden, and anything in the nature of a fire for warmth had been impossible. That men, used for the most part to a roof, dry clothing and a dry bed, a stove wherewithal to warm chilled limbs and food undiluted with rain water could go through such an ordeal, and yet come out of it with a spirit which was the only undamped thing about them, affords an apt illustration of the temper of the Battalion, the Brigade, the Division, and, in fact, of the whole British Army. For what was typical of a part was typical also of the whole. In the face of death and mutilation and disaster, hardship, discomfort and unease men groused and grumbled, jested and laughed and — never lost heart.

CHAPTER FIVE.

The Winter of 1915-16

I.

The winter of 1915-16 passed, in the main, quietly. The usual routine of trench warfare was carried on, tours of the front line alternating with periods in reserve, during which such training was carried out as the atrocious conditions permitted.

In the line the Battalion faced the usual dangers and alarms incidental to trench warfare. Snipers on both sides were continually on the alert, and any inadvertent exposure during the hours of daylight was to court death. There were intermittent artillery bombardments, which were not, as a general rule, very severe, and fairly frequent bombardments by trench mortars and rifle grenades, while on one or two occasions enemy aircraft carried out bombing raids over the lines. The casualties inflicted by these routine activities of the enemy, although not in the ordinary way severe, were a regular feature of nearly every tour in the line.

The worst enemy of the Division during these months of its first winter in France was not the human foe in the opposing trenches, but the weather. Except for brief interludes during which the countryside was iron-bound in the grip of frost, the rain was almost continuous. At such times the whole terrain was a sea of mud, plentifully pitted with the deep pools of water-filled craters. Through this desolate morass men floundered back and forth from the mud-clogged trenches to the muddy rearward areas, drenched, for the most part, to the skin, and shivering with the raw damp cold. Trenches and communication trenches were frequently knee deep in mud and water, and in some places waist deep. The water-logged parapets were continually collapsing into the trenches until, in some parts, the shallow depression in the mud that alone remained was a trench only in name. The bringing up from the rear of rations, ammunition and supplies became a task of ever-increasing

difficulty and danger owing to the impassability of the communication trenches. Dugouts were, for the most part, entirely uninhabitable, and in the trenches the men were in a continual state of sodden wetness, plastered with mud to the waist and aching with cold.

The discomfort and hardship of such days were enough to break the courage of the bravest, and it seems almost incredible that human hardihood could endure days and weeks of such existence without cracking. That the officers and men did, in actual fact, endure; that in spite of everything they were able to preserve some semblance of cheerfulness and pass the time-honoured jests; that they went through the ordeal with resolution unshaken and courage undismayed is surely evidence enough of the stuff of which they were made.

It was during the month of October in 1915 that the 1st Canadian Division initiated and developed the idea of the trench raids which afterwards became such a popular form of amusement for the whole British Army and such a serious annoyance to the enemy. These raids sadly discomposed the nerves of the Germans, and invariably led to some more or less indiscriminate shell fire. It was as a result of such a raid that the 31st Battalion came in for some unexpected shelling on October 15th. Kemmel suffered considerably, Pte. F. C. Whitecutt being killed by a flying shell splinter while on guard outside the Chateau, while in Dranoutre a number of civilians were killed. The bombardment continued throughout the day and far into the night of the 16th, by which time the enemy spite appeared to have exhausted itself. On the following day, however, when the Battalion returned to the line, heavy shell fire was again reopened, Sergt. F. H. McBeth being killed and two men badly wounded during the relief. In the course of the night the bombardment became more intense, and continued to be heavy throughout the whole of the 18th, giving the men little respite and small chance of rest. By this time our own artillery had entered into the spirit of the thing, and for two days a lively artillery duel was maintained in which the enemy positions suffered at least as much damage as those occupied by the Canadians.

Towards the end of the same month, while the Battalion was in divisional reserve at Loker, considerable inconvenience and

hardship was occasioned by the lack of straw and fuel, and the men made a surreptitious raid on Kemmel Wood, where they cut out sufficient timber to meet their own requirements and those of the horses, which would otherwise have been compelled to stand in the mud without platform or shelter. This unauthorized requisition of Flemish property brought grief to the Brigade Headquarters, and rich compensation to the owners of the purloined trees. The thrifty — but for the fear of giving offence one might almost use the word avaricious — civilian population of France and Flanders had long ago learned of the generosity of the British in all such matters, and were not slow to exploit it. It was no uncommon thing, when a thirsty British battalion was marching up to the line, to see the peasants SELLING water from the wells on their farms to the men who were risking life in the defence of those very homesteads.

On October 25th the Battalion moved to new territory. It had been decided by Corps Headquarters to equalize the sectors held by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions, and as a result of this change the 6th Brigade was allocated to that portion of the front previously occupied by the 5th Brigade. It was snowing hard when the Battalion went into the line, and prospects for a comfortable tour were not very bright. The trenches were unrevetted, there were two feet of water in them, and dugouts and parapets were collapsing. On the following night, however, a severe frost set in, which coated the water with an inch and a half of ice, and gave a little temporary relief from the usual conditions of wetness and mud.

October 28th was marked by the introduction of a new form of enemy "Frightfulness." During the afternoon aerial torpedoes took the lives of six men, all of D Company. The wounds caused by the heavy charge of high explosive were so ghastly that it was not until the following day that the men could be identified and reported killed in action.

At about this time several minor incidents which are, perhaps, worthy of record, occurred. On November 27th two of the Battalion Scouts, unobserved themselves, discovered a large working party of Germans labouring in the open upon the repair of their parapet. Word was sent back, and the location communicated to a

battery. A few minutes later several rounds of shrapnel were sent over, which inflicted casualties and drove the enemy back to the shelter of the trenches. This incident affords a solitary example of the excellent work which the scouts were doing as a matter of daily routine. On the following day one of the two scouts concerned in this exploit, Pte. Roberta, was seriously wounded by a shell while on patrol, and later succumbed to his injuries.

During this tour in the line trench mortars were responsible for a number of casualties, one brief bombardment on November 29th killing six men of the Battalion and wounding two. One of the latter, a sergeant, died a few days later.

Another incident occurred at Regent Street Dugouts. A number of men of A Company were detailed for a fatigue party. It was one of those vile nights, pitch dark, cold and wet, while underfoot the mud was slippery as ice. Down the communication trench shuffled the weary men, muttering imprecations for being roped in for fatigue on such a night. Nearing Headquarters they had considerable difficulty in keeping on the trench mats, and tempers were rising to the boiling point. At this juncture a sentry yelled out through the darkness — "Halt, who goes there?" One of the party, in a voice full of disgust and misery, shouted back, "Pack mules." "Who said that?" enquired another voice from the darkness. "Baalam's ass," replied the same member of the disgruntled fatigue party, amid roars of laughter. The mirth was soon suppressed, however, when it was found that the second voice belonged to Captain Seaton, who proceeded to roundly admonish the men for their disregard of proper military procedure in the face of the enemy.

Early in December the West Lancs. Divisional Artillery, which had been covering the Division, was replaced by the Lahore Divisional Artillery. The West Lancs. had been stationed in this area for fifteen months, and had rendered excellent service.

On December 12th a draft of forty reinforcements arrived from England and were detailed to the various companies, while on the 14th the officers cadre received additions in the persons of Lieuts. A. C. Hansen, W. C. Bradburn and D. C. Robertson. On the same day Major L. H. Dawson and Lieut. C. A. Bateman were sent down to the Field Hospital with illness induced by exposure and

fatigue, while on the 15th another additional officer, Lieut. J. V. Richards, joined the unit.

The 31st Battalion had its first experience of tear gas during this tour of the trenches. Following a bombardment of the lines further north, the eyes of the men commenced to smart, and for an hour or more they were subjected to considerable pain and discomfort. Tear shells had been used by the enemy, and some of the gas had drifted south into the 31st Battalion lines.

On December 21st the Battalion was relieved and returned once more to Kemmel Shelters, the slough of the trenches being handed over to the 28th Battalion. December 25th was ushered in by heavy rain which continued throughout the day.

It was not a particularly jovial Christmas for the officers and men of the 31st Battalion. The weather was atrocious; weeks of exposure to cold and rain, environed by a sea of mud, had taxed to the utmost limit the endurance of the strongest and the cheeriness of even the greatest hearted. Bunyan's Slough of Despond was a happy and comparatively salubrious spot by comparison with the stinking, shell-tortured and bloody ooze of Flanders on that Christmas Day of 1915. Small wonder that the men, in the midst of such a desolation and with such dismal experiences behind them, found it difficult to capture the traditional spirit of the Yule-tide feast.

It is hard for men, destined to go over the top into what may prove to be devastating machine-gun fire, to wait in the cold dawning for zero hour to strike; it is hard for men to sit for hours in a trench under heavy shell fire to which their own guns make no reply; but for sheer depression there is surely nothing to equal long months spent under pitiless rain in the muddy waste of a Flanders battle-ground in winter.

Sickness had reared its venomous head in the ranks of the Battalion as a result of the abnormal conditions under which the men had to live. Capt. W. F. Seaton had been evacuated to hospital, and a number of other ranks were sent back with bronchitis, pneumonia, trench feet and influenza, while a few days later three other officers went down under the constant strain of hardship.

II.

So, amid desolation and discomfort, the year 1915 drew to its close. The 31st Canadian Infantry Battalion had now been in existence for some thirteen and a half months, in France for sixteen weeks and in the line for nearly fourteen. The men were no longer green and inexperienced troops, but soldiers inured to danger and fatigue. Although hardly as yet to be classed as veterans, and although still lacking in experience of really heavy actions and actual hand-to-hand fighting, they had proved their mettle by the way in which they had withstood shell fire and all the bitter trials of the Flanders winter.

During the last month of the year a start had been made upon the formation of the 3rd Canadian Division, and by the end of December the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade had been created. This consisted of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, which had been in France since the early winter of 1914 and which had, during that period, established a fighting reputation second to none; The 42nd Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada) from Montreal; the 49th Battalion from Edmonton; and the Royal Canadian Regiment, which had been on garrison duty in Bermuda since September, 1914. This Brigade, under the designation of Corps Troops, came into being on December 22nd, and was under the command of Major-Gen. M. S. Mercer, C.B., who was to command the new Division in the field.

Perhaps, at this particular juncture, while history hovers on the brink of a new year, it may be permissible to pause for a moment to consider what manner of man it was who made up, collectively, the Canadian Corps.

Every one of the 40,000 or more Canadian troops in France at this time was as near to physical perfection as careful selection and arduous training could make him. Every one had his own particular individuality which made him different from all the rest; yet super-imposed on this individuality was the seal of a type which renders a certain generalization feasible.

It is a well-recognized fact that the psychology of the British soldier was a constant source of bewilderment to both our Allies and the enemy. Speaking in a general way, the German soldier

was consciously a patriot; his songs were nearly all patriotic songs, or else songs which damned in no measured terms his country's enemies; his thoughts and motives were dominated by the idea of the Fatherland — an idea which had been carefully inculcated by his education. The French soldier was a conscious hero, his whole pose one of heroism; he wore the emblems of his decorations with pride, and was valorous in battle in order that he might live up to his own heroic ideal. The British Tommy, on the other hand, was neither a conscious hero nor a conscious patriot, or if he was either, he was extremely careful not to let anyone know of it. His songs were anything but patriotic, and the most popular had no bearing whatsoever upon the war. Many of them, and parodies on them, were lewd and entirely unprintable. "Rule Britannia" was never heard, and "God Save the King" was heard only in its proper place. The idea of a British regiment bellowing a Hymn of Hate at the Germans in the opposing trenches is quite unthinkable.

The British soldier accepted decorations and displayed the ribbons almost shamefacedly. He realized, in the great majority of cases, that chance only had singled him out from among his fellows for distinction, and that the whole thing was nothing to boast about or to take any particular pride. His general attitude toward the war was very much that of a man who has taken on an unpleasant job of work because he felt that he had to. He did not like it; he had, deep hidden and out of sight though it might be, the natural human fear of death and mutilation; he had all the human distaste for hardship and cold, hunger, fatigue, and discomfort; but as these things could not be avoided the only thing he could do was to put up with them and get on with his job as cheerfully as possible.

The average British soldier was no saint, and halos were not an Ordnance issue. He was just a very ordinary human being, "even as you and I," with all the ordinary human weaknesses, living for the most part in a particularly virulent kind of hell, and making the most of such opportunities of pleasure — legitimate or otherwise — as came his way. When the occasion offered he would not infrequently drink to excess, and amusements of an even more dubious nature were not unknown to him. The traditions of the old

Regular Army survived to a large extent in the New Armies. It was not considered good taste to show too nice a discrimination in the choice of epithet, while anything in the nature of sentiment or emotionalism was strictly taboo.

Yet although no saint, the British soldier was a man. He possessed, too, the saving grace of humour. His jests may have been often in questionable taste; but the fact that he could jest at all in the circumstances in which he was placed was a hall-mark of his courage. He never knew when he was beaten, and would hang on long after all hope of victory had passed. Neither hardship nor discomfort nor danger could daunt his spirit; and although he feared, he had learned to master his fears. He groused a lot and grumbled over trifles, and was more liable to cause trouble over an issue of rancid butter than about an order to go over the top in face of devastating machine-gun fire.

The Canadian was much akin to his British prototype. He was, perhaps, less readily amenable to discipline, retained a stronger individuality and was possessed of greater initiative; and, for the rest, he shared all the faults and all the splendid virtues of his cousin from the Mother Country.

Looking back after this lapse of time it seems almost incredible that human beings could have endured that which our troops in France and Flanders were called upon to endure. The unending nervous tension, the continual exposure to rain and cold in mud-choked trenches, the frequent bombardments with their accompaniment of death and mutilation, and, above everything else, the ugliness and desperate monotony of it all — surely men who could go through months, and even years, of such existence and come through unbroken are worthy of the highest praise that the world can bestow.

III.

Measured by the scale of the war as a whole, the 31st Battalion had suffered little, apart from hardship, discomfort and the inevitable ugliness and monotony of trench warfare; during its first fourteen weeks of active service. Total casualties, up to the end of 1915, amounted to 40 killed and 73 wounded, or an average of little more than one casualty per day. It is worthy of note that

from December 29th to January 29th the Battalion suffered only one casualty in its three tours of the trenches.

During the early months of 1916 conditions remained much the same as they had been during the autumn. Things were, for the most part, quiet. Tours of the trenches alternated with periods in brigade or divisional reserve. There were desultory bombardments by the artillery of both sides; there was a certain amount of sniping and bombing with trench mortars and grenades; and casualties, although not frequent, continued to mount up. Owing to the deplorable conditions under which the men were compelled to live, sickness took much greater toll of the strength of the unit than enemy action.

The weather continued bad, spells of rain, snow and sleet being broken by occasional interludes of frost or of more genial weather, during which aerial activity on the part of both Allied and German aeroplanes was increasingly in evidence.

The month of January was marked, to the unbounded delight of all ranks, by the inauguration of leave, which commenced about the 15th, and by the growing prevalence of "trench feet," which was less enthusiastically welcomed. Much of the Kemmel Sector was below sea level, which resulted in a considerable amount of underground seepage and rendered drainage difficult and, in some parts, impossible. The inevitable result of continual standing and walking in cold water and mud was the appearance of that distressing malady which has become known as "trench feet." During January, and, indeed, until the advent of dryer conditions, the Battalion suffered considerably from this cause.

On the 11th of the month an event occurred which led to the first citation for bravery to fall to the lot of the Battalion. During an enemy bombardment with minenwerfer, one of the bombs fell into the trench near a group of men and lay with its fuse still burning. With admirable presence of mind, Pte. A. H. Jackson ran up to the bomb and removed the fuse, being awarded for this act of bravery the D. C. M.

Towards the end of the month the Prince of Wales arrived in the Canadian Corps area and visited the line. His tour, however, did not include the 31st Battalion, which was in reserve at the time. On the 30th the Rt. Hon. A. Bonar Law, Secretary of State for the

Colonies, inspected the Battalion, and thanked it, in the name of the British Government, for its excellent work and its devotion to duty. Mr. Bonar Law was accompanied by the Divisional Commander, Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner, V. C., who read out to the assembled troops the citation concerning the award to Pte. Jackson of the D. C. M.

During the night of January 30th, the 28th and 29th Battalions organized a successful raid on the enemy's lines, penetrating at two points and inflicting casualties. One party of the 28th Battalion, with blackened faces, jumped into a trench full of the enemy who had just emerged from their dugouts, and created a regular panic. Despite enfilade machine-gun fire during the return to their own lines, the raiders suffered few casualties.

On the last day of the month a second brigade of the 3rd Canadian Division, which was in process of organization, entered the line. This was the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade, and consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles.

IV.

The month of February was uneventful in so far as the 31st Battalion was concerned. Bombardments by enemy artillery and minewerfers did considerable damage to the trenches without inflicting serious casualties. Repairing the havoc thus inflicted kept the men employed during their tours in the front line. In addition to this, a considerable amount of work was carried out in the way of consolidating and improving the trenches. Via Gellia was revetted with sand bags, and trench mats were laid along its entire length, rendering it much safer and less difficult to traverse than it had been originally. A great deal of wiring was done in the support trenches and to the north-east of the sector held, and other useful work of a like nature was carried out.

Meanwhile events had been developing upon the Western Front which were destined to have a direct bearing upon the future of the Canadian Corps. On the front of the V. British Corps, just north of the Ypres — Comines Canal, the trenches were placed on high ground commonly known as the "Bluff," which was, at that time, partially covered with trees. During the afternoon of February 13th, the Germans opened up a heavy bombardment

against the positions occupied by the V. Corps, and exploded mines in the direction of Hill 60, Hooge and Sanctuary Wood. In the twilight the enemy launched several fierce infantry attacks against the British lines. In the main, these were repulsed. North of the Canal, however, the line was penetrated and the "Bluff" was occupied. A number of men of the 31st Battalion witnessed this fighting from the heights above Boeschepe.

When the enemy artillery bombardment was at its height the Canadian artillery received a request for help from the V. British Corps. This was responded to, the Canadian guns directing enfilade fire against the German positions in front of the "Bluff." In order to further assist the British, the line held by the Canadian Corps was extended, on February 16th, 700 yards northward in order to relieve a battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers. The relief was carried out by the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade.

Towards the middle of the month it became known that the enemy had concentrated large bodies of reserves at two points in their front. Of these, one was before Verdun, and the other to the north of the British line. The purpose of the latter was not definitely known, although it was supposed, with good reason, that a third great attack on Ypres was in course of preparation.

The concentration to the south proved to be more formidable than had been anticipated. It consisted of nineteen infantry divisions supported by a tremendous force of artillery. In the early morning of February 21st, in cold, clear weather, the artillery opened the attack on Verdun with a bombardment which was the severest of any in the war, up to that time. After nine hours of devastating shell fire the infantry advanced with orders to "penetrate the French positions with arms slung."

The French artillery had not been silenced, however, and the French regiments fought back with great resolution and courage. Verdun held out, and for months the battle for the fortress continued. It was not until early in July, after the inner defences had been penetrated, that the threat to his lines in Picardy, brought about by the Battle of the Somme, compelled the enemy to withdraw from the attack.

In the meantime the French, hard pressed by the great attack on Verdun, clamoured for assistance. As a result, a fourth British

army was organized and put into the Arras sector of the line, thus releasing French divisions for the defence of Verdun.

These events necessitated a reorganization of the British front. One of the many results of such reorganization was the taking over by the Canadian Corps of the line previously held by the V. British Corps. The change-over was authorized early in March, and was in progress from March 17th until April 8th.

On March 1st further fighting occurred in front of the "Bluff," to the north of the positions held by the Canadian Corps. In the early morning a heavy bombardment was directed against the German lines, which was continued throughout the day and the night following. Canadian artillery co-operated with the British in this bombardment, which reduced the enemy defences in this sector to ruins. On the following day the infantry attacks were everywhere successful, the British troops capturing their objectives, which included the "Bluff," and consolidating their limited gains.

During this action the enemy along the front held by the 31st Battalion remained inactive, and it was not until late on March 2nd that signs of aggression commenced. A fusillade of trench-mortar shells was then opened up against the trenches held by the unit. Unfortunately a number of the men were occupying a detached piece of trench, and, caught unawares by the enemy fire, made a dash across the open to regain the Battalion lines. They were caught by machine-gun fire, and three of them were wounded.

While this minor activity was in progress, A Company of the 60th Canadian Infantry Battalion, of Montreal, joined the 31st Battalion for instructional purposes. This unit formed, with the 43rd, 52nd and 58th Battalions, the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade which was at this time being organized to complete the 3rd Division of the Canadian Corps.

After this tour of the trenches the Battalion went back into billets at La Clyle and Scherpenberg, and on March 5th moved into corps reserve at Berthen. A few days later Major L. H. Dawson parted from the unit owing to severe illness, and did not again rejoin.

On March 9th the Battalion returned to its old billets at Locre. Four days later; after an absence of five weeks, it once more took over its old positions at Kemmel, relieving the P.P.C.L.I., which had

just completed its first tour in the line as a unit of the Canadian Corps. The trenches were in fair condition in spite of the bad weather; and two new strong points had been established in the area, known as Fort Regina and Fort Saskatchewan respectively, on the right and left of Suicide Road. During this tour Col. J. S. Stewart, of the Canadian Artillery Brigade, visited the lines of the Battalion and made the rounds accompanied by Col. Bell.

On March 23rd, Col. A. H. Bell departed on leave, and the command of the Battalion developed upon Major W. H. Hewgill. At this date Majors E. S. Doughty and H. M. Splane had also left the unit in order to visit the positions in the Ypres-Comines Canal area which were to be allotted to the 31st Battalion when the Canadian corps took over the trenches held by the V. British Corps. The Canadian lines were, in their turn, inspected by staff and regimental officers of the 150th British Brigade, and other preliminary work incidental to the change-over was pushed ahead.

On the last day of the month the 31st Battalion was relieved by the 4th Yorks, and moved into billets at Loker for the night.

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that, upon taking over the 31st Battalion positions at Kemmel, the Officer Commanding the 150th British Brigade congratulated the unit upon the condition of the trenches, and praised the system of trench stores, orders and plans which had been in use. Brig.-General H. D. B. Ketchen, D.S.O., commanding the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, also commented favourably upon the conditions. This praise was rendered the more gratifying in view of the fact that an accurate bombardment by the enemy had done considerable damage just before the change-over.

Soldiering on the Western Front involved a great deal more than the defence of trenches, the repulse of attacks and the making of counter-attacks. It involved also much hard manual and mental labour: the bringing up of supplies and ammunition from the rear; the repairing of trenches damaged by enemy bombardments; the improvement of trench systems and establishment of strong points; the putting in of drainage systems, the putting out of wire and a score of other activities of a like nature. It involved also a great deal of detailed planning and organization on the part of Battalion, Brigade and Divisional Headquarters. It is, indeed, fairly safe to state that, under normal circumstances, the efficiency of a battalion could be fairly judged by the condition of its trench system.

CHAPTER SIX.

St. Eloi

I.

On April 1st the 31st Battalion left Locré and moved to billets at Corps reserve near Bailleul where, it was hoped, the unit would be permitted to rest for a few days before taking up its new positions in the line. This hope, however, was doomed to disappointment. Before the men had settled down in their new quarters orders were received to move out again on the following day.

There was little rest for Battalion Headquarters that night. Orders for the premature and unexpected move had to be drawn up, transport and commissariat organized, and a score of other details arranged.

At 8:15 a.m. on the following day the Battalion paraded and moved off to the crossroads at St. Jans Capel, where it was joined by the other units of the Brigade an hour later. The Battalion took its place as No. 4 of the column, its transport being brigaded. The day was fine, and very warm for the time of year, and the march was rather trying to the men. As usual, they were burdened like pack mules and were wearing for the first time the recently issued steel helmets. Moreover, they had done no serious marching for nearly six months. In spite of all this the men acquitted themselves well. Discipline was good, and not a man fell out during the march.

The column moved by way of La Manche, through Mont Noir, Westoutre-Reninghelst and Ouderdom to Camp A. near Dickebusch. Upon arrival, five officers and five N. C. O.'s were immediately detailed to go forward and look over the trenches known as "P" trenches which, it was then understood, were to be taken over by the Battalion.

It was at 11.00 a.m., on April 3rd, that the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade received orders to move forward to its new positions at

St. Eloi. Owing to the unstable state of the line, and the poor protection offered by the trench systems at many points, it had been decided to allot a single brigade front to the 2nd Canadian Division until such time as the situation should become more settled. Early in the afternoon of the same day the Battalion Commander, Major W. H. Hewgill (Col. Bell being, at the time, absent on leave) received orders to the effect that the unit would not occupy "P" trenches, as previously arranged, but "U" trenches. The latter had not, at that time, been reconnoitered, and the area was entirely unknown to any member of the unit. The confusion which characterized the subsequent fighting was undoubtedly in part due to lack of exact knowledge of the terrain, and in part to the nature of the territory in which it took place.

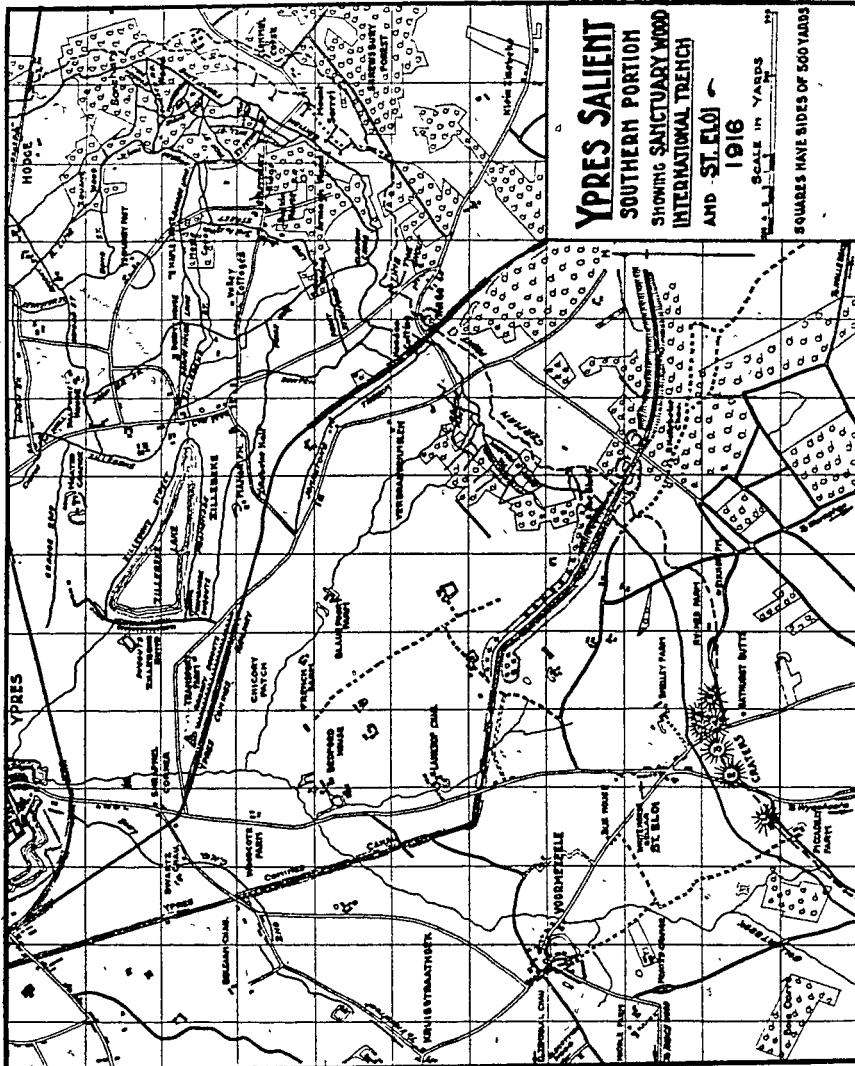
Immediately upon receipt of the changed orders Major Hewgill sent forward an officer and two N. C. O.'s from each company, under the command of Major E. S. Doughty, to survey the line and arrange for company frontages. This survey was carried out under conditions of extreme difficulty. The time available was inadequate for anything approaching a complete examination of the positions, protection in many places was poor or practically non-existent, and the work had to be carried out under a heavy enemy bombardment. It reflects great credit on all concerned that the reconnaissance yielded such good results as it did.

At 5.00 p.m. the Battalion commenced its forward march to the trenches, and reached Dickebusch an hour and a half later. A heavy enemy bombardment was in progress, and the men were halted for three-quarters of an hour pending abatement of the enemy's fire. Shortly after 7.00 p.m. the bombardment died down, and the Battalion moved forward to its rendezvous.

II.

In order to arrive at some understanding of the confused fighting which took place immediately after the 31st Battalion had occupied its new positions in the line, it will be necessary to describe in some detail the environment in which it took place and the events which immediately preceded it.

While the transfer of frontage between the V. British and the Canadian Corps was being carried out, severe fighting occurred



on the sector which was subsequently to be taken over by the 31st Battalion. On March 27th troops of the V. British Corps delivered an attack upon the enemy lines in the direction of St. Eloi.

Mine shafts had been already driven under the enemy positions in front of the village of St. Eloi, and the mines were laid ready for use. It was feared, not without reason, that delay in firing the mines might result, at any moment, in their discovery and destruction. In spite, therefore, of the fact that the sector was to be taken over almost immediately by the Canadians, it was decided to fire the mines and attack at once.

St. Eloi lay at the southern corner of the Ypres Salient, the British front-line trenches forming, at this point, a shallow re-entrant for about six hundred yards. The opposing lines, just opposite St. Eloi, ran almost east and west, and not north and south as was usual. To the left front of the village was a small area of slightly elevated land which was known as the "Mound," and which commanded the low, flat territory behind the British line. For this reason the position had been the scene of much heavy fighting since the early days of trench warfare on the Western Front.

Before the commencement of the action of March 27th all the south-western half of the "Mound" was in German hands, and only the extreme north-eastern corner in the hands of the British. The object of the attack of the V. British Corps was to drive the enemy from the "Mound" and iron out the salient which his line made in the British front.

The attack was launched by the firing of the mines. So terrific was the explosion that its concussion was felt for miles behind the lines, and heard at Folkestone, in Kent, England. Trenches on both sides collapsed, their parapets sliding into the water that half filled them. Old landmarks were blotted out, and the entire aspect of the terrain was altered. Huge craters, which came to be known as Craters Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, were torn in the slopes of the "Mound" and about the junction of the roads from Wytschaete and Warneton. The German trenches in the vicinity were obliterated, and German dead and wounded were scattered in all directions.

Before the sound of the explosions had died away, and while the debris was still falling, troops of the 9th British Brigade swept

across to the second German line, carrying everything before them. To the right the attack, which was delivered by the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, met with very little opposition, and quickly captured its objectives. On the left the assault of the 4th Royal Fusiliers was not quite so successful, and its advance was less rapid. As a result, a gap was left in the line through which the enemy streamed to occupy Crater No. 5.

During the days which followed intensive fighting took place for the possession of this crater. Attack and counter-attack, bombardment, and counter-bombardment, followed one another in rapid succession until the whole area was pitted with shell holes. Bomb, bayonet, shell and machine gun all played their parts in this struggle, and took their toll in dead and wounded. Now one side and now the other gained a temporary advantage, both sides fighting with equal stubbornness and courage to drive the other out of the crater and off the "Mound."

The struggle lasted for over a week. Finally, when both British and German forces were nearing exhaustion, an attack was launched on April 3rd by the 76th British Infantry Brigade which left the crater in British hands.

It was this area, torn and devastated by the recent fighting, which was taken over by the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade on the night of that same day. The British units which were relieved by the Brigade had no time to consolidate their recent gains or to repair the devastated trenches. They were, indeed, too exhausted for such work, and were unable even to remove their own dead from the trenches.

That the Germans, although temporarily driven from the "Mound," had no intention of acknowledging defeat and breaking off the action, the 6th Canadian Brigade was soon to learn to its cost.

III.

The sector taken over by the 31st Battalion on the night of April 3rd ran from Trench 19 to Trench 28. The left flank of the position rested on the Ypres-Comine Canal, and the right on the edge of Crater No. 6, the total length of the line held being about 1,500 yards.

From the points of view of defence, protection and comfort little can be said in favour of the positions occupied. A very good description of the state of the trenches is embodied in the report of the G. S. O. 1 of the 2nd Canadian Division. This reads, in part, as follows:

"The line handed over was more of a line on the map than an actual line of defence. From the right for 290 yards it consisted of a very wet and shallow communication trench; thence, for 540 yards, of a deep, narrow, wet, untraversed trench with fire steps facing north in various stretches; thence, for 120 yards, it consisted of a straight, deep, unstrutted drain; thence, for 110 yards, where it joined the old British front line, it consisted of a narrow and wet communication trench. For long stretches the trenches were from 2 to 3 feet deep in water. There was no wire. There were a large number of bodies, both German and British lying about. The actual position of the enemy had not been definitely established. Much damage had been done to the old British line before the 2nd Canadian Division took over. On April 3rd the Germans had shelled the new line (constructed by the 2nd Canadian Division's engineers, eastward from the old British line to the German line south of Crater No. 1, which later became known as the Canadian trench) all day, and had done much damage to the trenches, such as they were; it had been impossible for the 3rd Division garrison to do any appreciable amount of work on the line, and the men were very much exhausted when their relief arrived."

Even this admirable report does not give an adequate idea of the actual conditions. The support trenches were badly battered, dugouts were blown in, and the protection offered was poor. Communication trenches were, in many places, obliterated, making liaison with the rearward positions difficult except under cover of darkness. Trench 20 of the front line was completely cut off from Trench 21, and communication between them was impossible, while for 75 yards, between Trenches 23 and 24, the parapet was down, rendering it impossible to man the trench except at night.



IV.

When the 31st Battalion took over this section of the line it relieved three British battalions, all of which were exhausted by the recent fighting and badly depleted in strength. These were the 12th Yorks, the 4th East Yorks and the 7th K.O.S.L.I. It was, therefore, decided that one company of the 31st Battalion should take over the front occupied by each of these units, leaving one company in support. The disposition of the companies was arranged as follows:

A Company, under Capt. J. C. McPherson, took over from the 12th Yorks in the right subsection, Trenches 19 and 20.

B Company, under Capt. W. W. Piper, took over from the 4th East Yorks in the centre subsection, Trenches 21 to 24.

C Company, under Major E. S. Doughty, took over from the 7th K.O.S.L.I. in the left subsection, Trenches 25 to 28.

D Company, under Major P. J. Daly, D.S.O., was ordered to occupy the support trenches at Spoil Bank, Locké House and Frenchman's Trench, to the rear of the left flank. Battalion Headquarters was at Spoil Bank. The extreme right of the line was believed at first to be resting on Crater No. 5, and was covered by the Battalion Bombers, who occupied what, at the time, were supposed to be Craters 5 and 6. It subsequently transpired that the crater upon which the right flank rested was probably No. 6, and that the craters occupied by the bombers were Nos. 6 and 7. There was, throughout, considerable confusion as to which crater was which, and even to-day the question has never been definitely settled. No complete reconnaissance of the positions had been possible and no trench maps were available. Very little was known during the action of the location of the various craters, of which some seventeen existed on the Brigade front, all much larger than any that the 31st Battalion had previously seen. Even the position of the component parts of the Battalion was frequently doubtful. Nothing at all was known of the disposition of the enemy.

Beyond the crater, to the right of the Battalion position, the line was entirely obliterated. The immediate consequence of this was a gap of fully 80 yards between the right flank of the 31st Battalion and the left flank of the 27th Battalion, which was holding

the next sector. At no time during the subsequent fighting were the two units in touch with one another.

This, then, was the general position when, on the night of April 3rd the 31st Battalion took over the line.

The relief was effected under heavy enemy shell fire. Owing to this bombardment, to the poor protection afforded by the trenches and communication trenches, and to lack of detailed knowledge of the topography of the area, the change-over involved considerable difficulty. It was, however, carried through with wonderful precision and lack of confusion, and without undue delay. Almost miraculously, it was completed with only one casualty.

As soon as the relief had been carried out work was commenced upon the consolidation of the position. New trenches were dug, and pumps were installed for the purpose of removing the mud and water from the existing trenches.

Throughout the night, under a persistent enemy bombardment, this work went forward. The men, wearied though they were from recent marching, laboured with a will in an effort to get the battered trenches into a better state of defence. Mud, in some places hip deep, hampered movement, and added enormously to the difficulty of the work. The trenches were littered with the bodies of British and German dead, and the gruesome task of getting rid of these relics of recent fighting fell to the lot of the Battalion.

Attempts were also made, during the night, to establish contact with the left flank of the 27th Battalion, but these proved fruitless. It subsequently transpired that the line held by this unit commenced to the right of Crater No. 5, somewhat in advance of, and almost 80 yards away from, the right flank of the 31st.

V.

The Battalion passed the first night in its new positions under a persistent and heavy shelling by the enemy artillery, and at 10 o'clock on the following morning the bombardment became very violent. The trenches, which had been repaired at the cost of so much labour during the night, were blown in, communication trenches were flattened out, dugouts destroyed and telephone wires cut. A Company, on the right, and the right wing of B Company

in the centre, received the brunt of this shelling. At many points both front-line and communication trenches ceased to exist. As the bombardment proceeded the defence system ceased altogether to be a continuous line and became a series of more or less isolated posts.

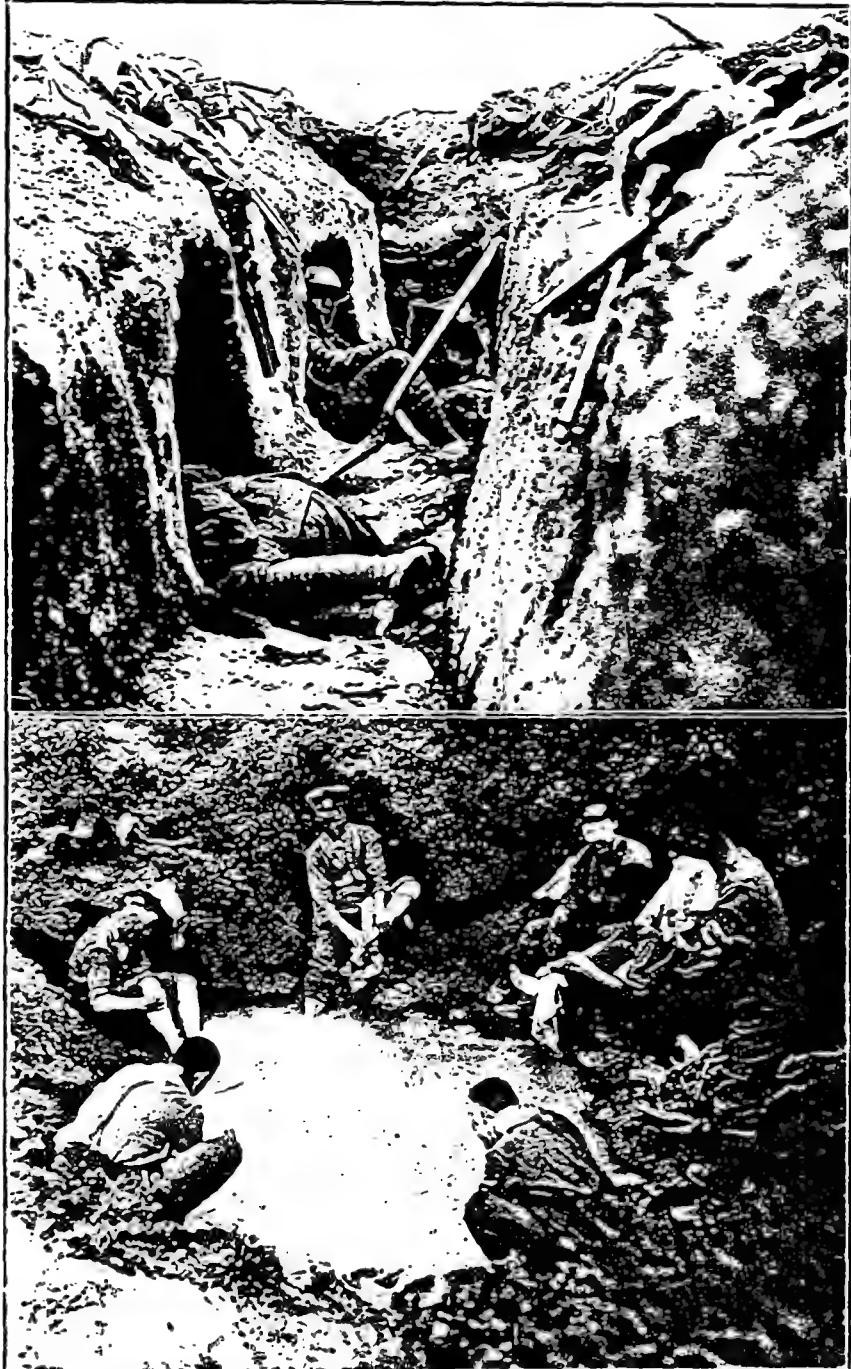
Casualties began to mount up at an alarming rate, and communication with the rear became more and more difficult as the battering of the trenches continued. The tram line forward had been blown up in many places and rendered useless. The task of the men of D Company, upon whom devolved the duty of bringing up rations and supplies, became more difficult and dangerous as the bombardment continued.

Heavy shelling persisted until 5.00 p.m., the right of the line taking the worst of it throughout the day. During the afternoon Col. Bell returned from leave and resumed command of the Battalion.

In spite of the heavy bombardment, the men worked throughout the day repairing, insofar as was possible, the damage done to the trenches, and endeavouring to consolidate the positions. A Company made an effort to put out wire on the right flank, but found that this was impossible of accomplishment on account of the heavy shell fire. C Company, on the other flank of the unit, had been rather more successful in this regard, and had managed to cover part of its front with some twenty yards of apron wire during the night. A bombing post had also been established under cover of darkness on the extreme right of the Battalion front, but during the heavy bombardment of the morning it had been destroyed and its occupants either killed or wounded. Attempts to re-establish this post during the afternoon failed on account of its exposed position, and it was eventually abandoned.

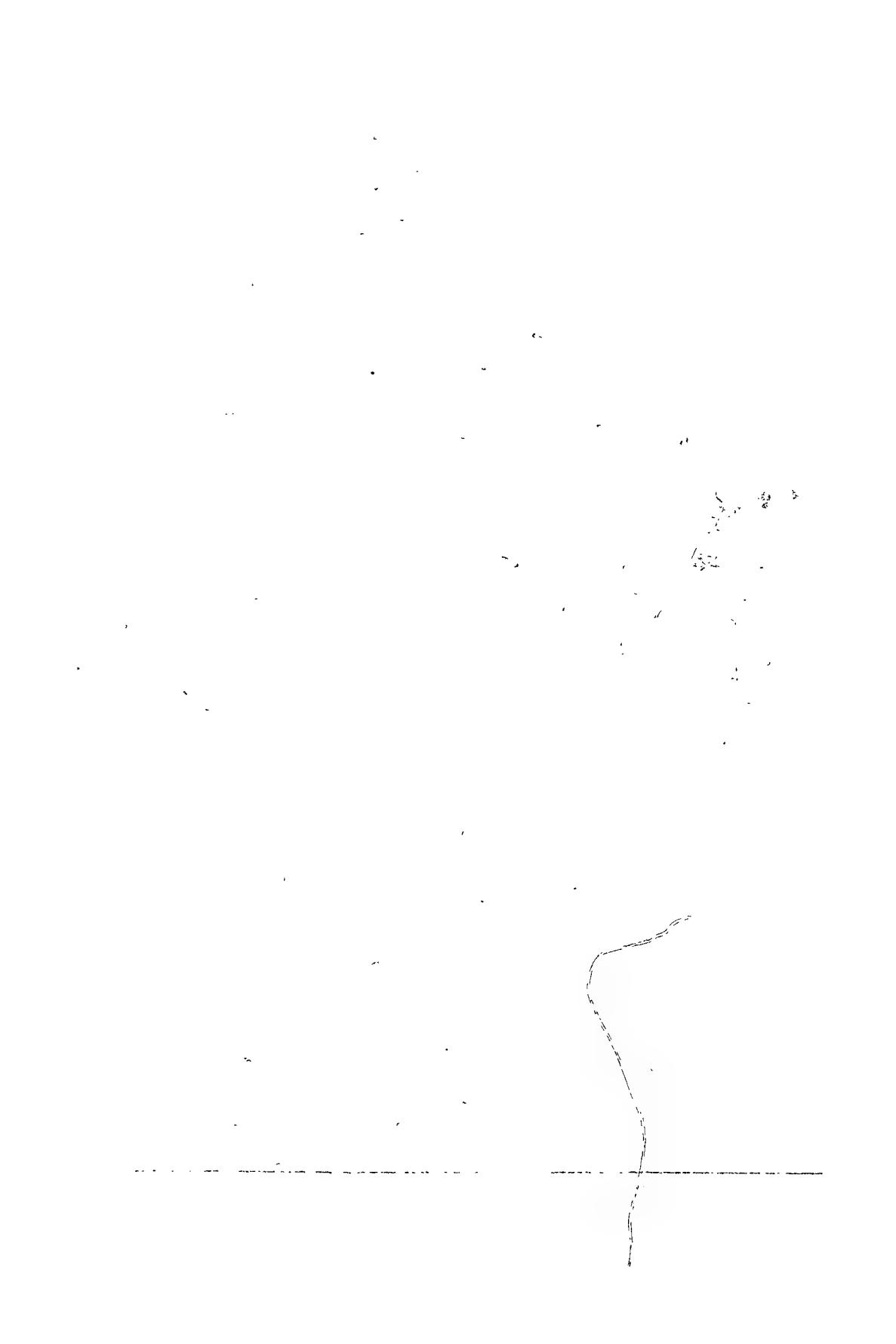
Shortly after 5.00 p.m. the artillery fire decreased in violence, and the night passed without any further intensive bombardment, although the enemy continued to shell the Battalion lines from time to time.

Casualties during the first twenty-four hours in the line amounted to 35 killed and wounded, a moderate total in view of the poor protection and the extreme severity of the bombardment. The men, tired out by unremitting labour and lack of sleep, and shaken by the continuous shelling of their first really intensive bombard-



Top: The simple life in the front line.

Bottom: Shell-hole Toilet.



ment, stood up splendidly under the strain. With the exception of the bombing post on the extreme right flank, all the original positions had been maintained.

Among the wounded was Lieut. W. C. Bradburn, battalion Grenade Officer, his duties being assumed by Lieut. A. C. Hansen.

VI.

During the night of April 4th, and the early morning of April 5th, the enemy kept the Battalion positions under an intermittent shell fire. Although less severe than the bombardment of the previous night, it was sufficient to keep the men on edge, and prevent sleep. Such work as was possible was done on the trenches, but physical exhaustion set a limit to activities in this direction.

At 7.00 a.m. on April 5th the enemy put down a most violent bombardment, which lasted for an hour. Front-line communication and support trenches were deluged with shells of all calibres, and were entirely obliterated in many places. The crash of the explosions was almost continuous, and from the rear the whole area appeared to be wrapped in an inferno of leaping flame and up-flung earth.

At 8.00 a.m. the shelling decreased in violence, but between 12.00 noon and 12.30 p.m., 7.00 and 8.00 p.m. and 10.20 and 11.20 p.m. the line was bombarded with equal severity, a steady artillery fire being kept up in the intervals. On this second day of the tour the casualties amounted to 26 killed and wounded.

As on the previous day, the right of the line had suffered most severely from the enemy artillery. In particular, A Company had been called upon to endure the most violent of the shelling. Apart from the casualties which had been sent back to the rear, many of the men were suffering from shock, and all were nearing the limit of human endurance through continual labour and lack of sleep.

C Company, holding the left of the line, and D Company, in support, had been less roughly handled. It was, therefore, decided, on the night of April 5th/6th, to withdraw A Company into support, to bring up D Company to take its place in the line, and to move C Company from the left to replace B Company in the centre. These reliefs were carried out quietly and without confusion under cover of darkness.

In addition to these changes, an attempt was made, during the night, to push out patrols to reconnoitre the enemy positions. One of these was led by Lieut. Arbuckle, who was accompanied by Cpl. Woods and Pte. Batson. It penetrated to a distance of 900 yards beyond the front line positions, and discovered a large number of abandoned German rifles, many German dead, and a proposed new trench line marked out with tapes. This patrol was caught during its return in the heavy bombardment that fell on the area on the morning of April 6th, and Lieut. Arbuckle was wounded. He managed, however, to slip through the bursting shells and get into the Battalion lines. Cpl. Woods and Pte. Batson decided to await the lifting of the German bombardment, and took shelter in an old shell crater, where they remained the whole of the morning and afternoon until, at 3.00 p.m., a shell-burst killed Cpl. Woods and wounded his comrade in the ankle. It was not until dusk that the latter managed to crawl back and regain the Battalion lines.

On the same night an inter-battalion relief was carried out on the right of the Brigade front, the 29th Battalion replacing the 27th. It had been intended to relieve the 31st Battalion as well, but owing to the exigencies of the situation this was found to be impossible.

On April 6th the enemy's efforts to regain possession of the "Mound" and its craters reached a climax. The weather, which had now been warm and dry for nearly two weeks, remained fine. The area was drying out somewhat, although some of the trenches were still deep in mud.

Operations commenced at 3.00 a.m., when the enemy put down a terrific bombardment along the Brigade front. This bombardment lasted continuously for 16 hours, sometimes decreasing in intensity for a while only to be renewed again with increased violence.

During the day the German high-explosive shells tore great gaps in the line, and obliterated all traces of the fire trench to the left of the Warneton Road on the front of the 29th Battalion. All communication trenches leading up to the right flank of the 31st Battalion positions were so broken up that they afforded no cover at all, making it impossible for troops to pass in daylight, and in this area all dugouts but two were destroyed. Trenches 22 and 23, in the centre subsection, were flattened, telephone wires were cut and

communication trenches badly damaged. All day long the whole area spouted with the flame of bursting shells and the brown fountains of upflung earth and mud.

The Canadian artillery had not been moved into the new sector, as it was deemed inadvisable to change over and register the guns in the middle of an action. The British artillery covering the Canadian positions opened up on the enemy, however, in retaliation shortly after 3 o'clock.

The enemy bombardment was particularly severe upon the right and centre subsections of the 31st Battalion line, held respectively by D Company under Major P. J. Daily, D.S.O., and C Company, commanded by Major E. S. Doughty. No. 16 Platoon, on the extreme right of D Company, was caught in the enemy barrage and completely isolated for a time. It managed eventually to work its way back to the left flank of the company position, where there was some protection.

In the meantime the enemy had put down a heavy bombardment right across the centre of Trench 22 to Shelly Farm, in the rear, using high explosive shells to cut the wires. Before long Trenches 22 and 23 were practically demolished, and it looked as though contact between the right flank of C Company and the left flank of D Company would be lost. As telephone communication to the rear had been broken by shell fire, a runner was dispatched to Lieut. Pinkham, in support, asking for reinforcements of ten men to take over Trench 21. These were sent forward, and took up position lying down on the "duck walk" of the trench in order to obtain such protection as was available from the flying splinters. It was this small detachment which, a little later, was destined to assist in repelling the German infantry attack on the Battalion positions.

VII.

Thus, accompanied by the thud and crash of scores of guns and the concussions of bursting shells, the misty dawn of April 6th broke over the shattered and crumbling trenches. With the first light of day enemy troops, which had managed to slip through the British barrage, appeared from the morning mists upon the St. Eloi-Wytschaete Road, and advanced upon the positions held by the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade. Opposite to the 29th Battalion

were troops of the 1st Battalions of the 214th and 216th Reserve Regiments, while detachments of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved against the positions held by the 31st Battalion.

The enemy occupied Craters 2 and 3 practically without opposition, the trenches of the 6th Brigade in this vicinity having been blown to bits and rendered untenable. The capture of these craters established the enemy to the rear of the left flank of the 29th Battalion. Pushing still further, the enemy advance was soon close up to the right flank of the 31st Battalion.

At about 4.30 a.m., just as it was getting light, Major P. J. Daly, who was holding Crater 7 with one platoon of D Company, observed some 150 to 200 Germans advancing upon the crater and in the direction of Trench 21 on the right of C Company. Rapid fire was immediately opened upon the enemy by Major Daly's party and by the men of Platoon No. 16 on the left flank of the company, as well as by the troops of C Company occupying Trenches 20 and 21. Some 25 or 30 of the enemy were shot down, and the attack was repulsed, the Germans taking shelter in shell holes and old trenches in front of the Battalion position. Fearing another rush might be attempted, rifle fire was maintained against the hidden enemy, with the result that half a dozen or so attempted to surrender. They were told to come over, but some troops away on the left, mistaking their intentions, shot them down. The rest remained in hiding throughout the day.

During the forenoon Brigade Headquarters seems to have been in doubt as to the actual situation in the forward area. An enquiry was put through to Col. Bell asking if the 31st Battalion was holding two of the craters. The wire to the right flank being open at that time, the enquiry was passed on to Major Daly who, in order to make quite certain, personally visited both of the craters held by the Company. He then reported back to Battalion Headquarters that the craters were occupied, and that he had been in each of them. Unfortunately, Major Daly believed that the craters held by his company were Nos. 5 and 6, whereas they were in reality Nos. 6 and 7. This mistake was quite excusable, in view of the impossibility of any proper reconnaissance of the positions and the fact that Crater No. 1 was a considerable distance to the right of the group of craters on and around the "Mound." Throughout the action the existance

of Crater No. 1 was unknown to the men of the 31st Battalion, Crater No. 2 being regarded by them as No. 1.

During the whole day the enemy maintained his bombardment of the Canadian positions without any intermission. Under the continual hammering the men suffered considerably. Cases of partial shock multiplied, nerves became frayed and casualties mounted up. Telephone communication to the rear was disrupted, and all messages had to be carried by runners, some of whom made the journey upwards of a dozen times in spite of poor protection and the enemy barrage. As the day wore on, contact between the component parts of the Battalion became more and more difficult to maintain, and the line became to an increasing extent a number of isolated posts. In many parts movements of troops in the rearward areas was a matter of absolute impossibility on account of lack of cover. The wounded could not be removed, and many of them suffered terribly for want of proper attention.

In spite of everything, however, the men clung grimly to their positions and showed no signs of weakening. The spirit of the Battalion under this, its first real test, was staunch, and its temper true.

At about 7.00 p.m., as dusk was falling, the order to "stand to" was passed down the line in anticipation of a possible attack by the Germans hidden on the Battalion front. A little later the enemy shell fire abated, and some fifty or sixty of the enemy broke cover and raced for their own line. Rapid fire was immediately opened upon them, and a number were seen to fall. It was evident that some of the Germans were still lying low in the old trenches and shell holes, and a sharp watch was maintained for any sign of movement on their part.

At nightfall the enemy bombardment died down and eventually ceased, but the British maintained their fire throughout the night. With the darkness, Capt. H. W. McGill, the M.O., brought up stretcher bearers and removed the wounded, while the garrison set to work to clear passages where the trenches were blocked. The fine weather had broken by this time, and rain was falling heavily, which did not add to the comfort of the exhausted men.

At about 7.00 a.m., on the following morning, a party of about fifteen of the enemy emerged from their cover on the Battalion front

with their rifles slung. Whether they intended to surrender, or were demented by the British artillery fire and their long spell in hiding, or were planning some treachery, will never be known. In the words of Major E. S. Doughty, they "behaved like a lot of wild Indians," and were shot down to a man by our troops.

In the meantime it had been discovered by the men of D Company that the craters to the right of the Battalion position, believed to be Nos. 4 and 5, were unoccupied. As there were insufficient men available to garrison these craters, word was sent back asking for reinforcements. As a result, two platoons of the 28th Battalion, under Capt. Bidwell, arrived during the morning of April 7th. The two officers (Major Daly and Capt. Bidwell) reconnoitred the positions, and decided not to move the men forward in the daylight for fear of bringing down a bombardment on the congested trenches.

The day was relatively quiet, and the enemy did not molest the lines to any great extent until the late afternoon. Then, about 5.00 p.m. he brought down a sereve bombardment on Convent Lane, traversing it with shell fire of great accuracy and thoroughness. This bombardment lasted some two hours. When it had died away, and dusk had descended, the two platoons under Capt. Bidwell took up position in the craters. By 9.30 p.m. they were in a state of defense, with a machine gun mounted and a good supply of bombs and ammunition on hand.

VIII.

The situation which actually existed on the night of April 7th is, to this day, very obscure. By this time the whole region was pitted with craters of varying sizes, and there appears to be no agreement in the various reports of the action as to which of the original seven craters was which, or as to which were the original craters and which new ones. This confusion is easily understood when the absence of maps, aerial photographs, adequate preliminary reconnaissance and even lucid information is borne in mind. It would appear, however, that the two platoons of the 28th Battalion did not take over Craters 4 and 5, but the foremost of a group of three craters to the rear of Crater No. 4, to the right of, and outside, the Battalion area. Craters 6 and 7 were protected and held by

the 31st Battalion, although this was not known at the time. Craters 2, 3 and 5, and possibly No. 4, were held by the enemy, together with most of the first-line positions on the front of the 29th Battalion. Crater No. 1, on the right flank of the Brigade, was still in Canadian hands. Unfortunately, it was confidently believed that Craters Nos. 4 and 5 were held by the two platoons of the 28th Battalion, and that only Craters Nos. 2 and 3 were in German hands.

Compared with the previous day, when 52 casualties had been sent back, April 7th was a quiet day, only 19 casualties, killed and wounded, being carried out of the lines.

Orders were received that night to the effect that the 31st Battalion would be relieved by the 19th Battalion of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, and sixteen guides were immediately sent to Voormezeele and Bedford House to guide in the relieving troops. It was late when the 19th Battalion arrived in the forward area, and delay was caused by the failure of the guides to locate the relief parties. The change-over was further delayed by the battered condition of the trenches and by the absence of landmarks in the obliterated positions. It was 3.00 a.m. on April 8th before the left, centre and support trenches were relieved. The relief for D Company, on the right of the line, did not reach the forward area until after daylight had broken, and as a result this company had to spend another day in the line.

The situation in which the men of D Company found themselves was not a happy one. They were on the verge of physical exhaustion, many of them were suffering from shock caused by the heavy and continuous bombardment which had fallen on their lines, and, to make matters worse, they were without water and rations. In view of their contemplated relief, no provision had been made for sending in supplies to the men, and hunger was added to their other sufferings.

Shelling of the area continued throughout the morning and afternoon of April 8th, and again D Company came in for its full share of the enemy bombardment. At about 5.00 p.m. and again at 7.30 p.m., heavy barrages were put down over Convent Lane, which lasted for fifteen and thirty minutes respectively. Shortly after 8 o'clock, however, the artillery fire died down, and the relief

of D Company was proceeded with. At 11:15 p.m. the weary troops were clear of the smashed line and on their way to the rear.

At Voormezeele hot tea and sandwiches had been provided for the men, and the Battalion Commander, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, had personally gone down to Convent Lane with his own guides to meet the Company and insure its relief. At Dickebusch a number of London busses, which had by this time made their appearance at the front in considerable numbers, were waiting to convey the men to their billets at Ouderdom.

The casualties suffered by the 31st Battalion during its six days in the trenches at St. Eloi were in excess of those suffered in the whole of the preceding six months of active service. The killed numbered 29, a moderate total considering the poor protection and the severity and duration of the bombardment; there were 147 wounded, including 6 officers, and four missing, making a total of 180. This represented about 25 per cent. of the trench strength of the Battalion on entering the line. D Company suffered the heaviest casualties, with 10 killed, 60 wounded and 2 missing.

The fighting at St. Eloi was what has since come to be known as a soldiers' battle, in which individual groups of men had to act on their own initiative. For long periods there was no telephonic communication to the rear, with the result that Battalion and Brigade Headquarters had little control over the situation and little knowledge of what was transpiring in the forward areas. In the line itself communication between individual platoons and their company commanders was frequently broken, and contact between the several companies was always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to maintain. Throughout the action the right flank of the Battalion was out of touch with the unit on its right, and was more or less in the air. In his report of the action Col. Bell concludes as follows:

"I wish to say that if it is thought, as I believe, that the Battalion has done well on this occasion, the credit is entirely due to the calibre of the officers and men. The conditions were such that I, personally, could do little or nothing. The communication between Battalion Headquarters and companies was much broken and, in the same manner, platoons and smaller bodies were cut off from their Company Commanders,

and were obliged to act on their own responsibility. All carried out their duty with courage and determination. The work of the Company in support was quite as dangerous as for those in the front line, as they had the carrying of the rations, etc. D Company spent the whole of the first two nights on this work, and A Company, when relieved from the front line, though they had had no sleep for two days and nights, carried on with this work though at every halt the men were falling asleep standing up."

During the action the 31st Battalion yielded none of the ground originally taken over with the exception of the bombers' post which was destroyed on April 4th, and the position lost by the withdrawal of No. 16 Platoon from the right flank on the 6th.

The enemy, supported by a great preponderance of artillery, fought stubbornly to gain its objectives — the craters on the "Mound." In this they were eventually successful. On April 16th, when at last the weather cleared sufficiently to permit of the taking of aerial photographs, it was ascertained that the enemy had regained most of the craters.

On April 13th, Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen called a brigade parade and thanked the men for their loyalty and devotion to duty during the action, and on May 2nd he forwarded the following letter to Col. A. H. Bell:

"Headquarters,
"6th Canadian Infantry Bde.,
"2nd May, 1916.

"My Dear Colonel:

"Although I addressed the 31st and the 27th Battalions some time ago and complimented them on their excellent conduct during the engagement of the 6th of April, at St. Eloi, I feel I should write and tell you again how very pleased and proud I am of the splendid manner in which your own Battalion held on to their line throughout that most trying experience. I cannot speak too highly of the most gallant behaviour of the Battalion, and I have so recorded my opinion in the Brigade records.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

"The many acts of personal gallantry and the pluck and courage of the whole Battalion on that date, stand out very prominently. Nothing could have been finer, and I congratulate you and your officers and N.C.O.'s and men, and thank you all again for your splendid work.

"Wishing all ranks the best of luck during the coming tour of duty in the Trenches,

"Believe me,

"Yours very sincerely,

"H. D. B. KETCHEN, B.G.,"

"Lt.-Colonel A. H. Bell,
"Commanding 31st (Alberta) Battalion."

CHAPTER SEVEN

April and May, 1916

I.

The great salient of Ypres was, throughout the war, essentially a British battle ground, and with "British" must be linked the word "Canadian." It is true that many French troops fought and died there. Nevertheless, the brunt of the heaviest fighting and the chief responsibility for the protection of the area fell upon the British. The cemeteries throughout this region, with their myriad simple crosses bearing the names of those who fell, tell us today of the fighting before Ypres and of the cost of its defence in British blood.

It was here that the old "Contemptibles," at bay in the face of overwhelming odds, fought the enemy to a standstill in the First Battle of Ypres. It was here that, in the Second Battle, the 1st Canadian Division, in its initial action, won for itself and for the troops of the Dominion undying fame. And it was here that the 2nd Canadian Division, one year later, met its first real test and came through undismayed.

The British position at Ypres was never a happy one. The Salient was extremely difficult to defend. Most of the front-line positions were open to enfilade fire from enemy artillery, and practically the whole of the rearward area was commanded by his guns. After the First Battle of Ypres the Germans found themselves in occupation of much of the high ground in the vicinity. Following the Second Battle the enforced withdrawal of the British lines on the night of May 3rd/4th, 1915, left the enemy in still better position in this regard, and conferred upon his artillery the immense advantages of better gun positions and more effective observation than were possessed by the British.

Throughout the war the Ypres Salient was a cause of grave anxiety to the British General Staff. It was a key position, and it was vulnerable to attack. A break-through by the enemy at this point would have had most serious results. It would have opened a road to the coast and the Channel ports. With the latter in enemy hands, communication between England and the armies in the field would have been enormously hampered, the whole Allied line in the west would have been turned, and the eventual outcome of the war might well have been altered. The region was costly to hold; but the retention of Ypres, the last Belgian town of importance to remain in Allied possession, had a sentimental significance which could not be ignored.

When the Canadian Corps took up its positions in the Salient in March and early April, 1916, there was greater cause than usual for anxiety. The weather had assisted methodical enemy bombardment in rendering the area even more difficult of tenure than under normal conditions. Many of the trenches and communication trenches were water-logged or choked with mud; many had been blown in and rendered useless; and even the best of them afforded but indifferent protection against a determined bombardment. The whole area stank of corruption, and in some parts hardly a shell could burst without throwing up the remains of hastily buried dead.

The anxiety engendered by these adverse conditions was in no way alleviated by the knowledge that the German General Staff had concentrated considerable forces to the north of the line held by the British. This concentration, coupled with the determined attacks by the enemy upon the high ground at the "Bluff" and the "Mound," suggested strongly the probability of an offensive against the Salient at no distant date.

The situation was rendered worse than it might otherwise have been by the preponderance of the German artillery over that of the British forces at Ypres. By this time the preparations for the Battle of the Somme were already far advanced, and little surplus artillery was available at other parts of the British front. In weight of metal as well as in number of guns the enemy had a very material advantage.

The British line at the time of the change-over between the Canadian and the V British Corps was practically the same as that to which withdrawal had been made after the Second Battle of Ypres. Of this line, the Canadians held the southern portion, with the 20th British Division on their left. The front occupied by the Corps commenced at Y-Wood (so-called from its shape) to the west of the Bellewaerde Lake and some 250 yards to the north of the Menin Road. Thence it ran in a south-easterly direction to the northern boundary of Sanctuary Wood, crossing the Menin Road in the village of Hooge. Through Sanctuary Wood the line ran south to the trenches known as "The Loop" which formed the apex of the Salient. From this point the front fell back slightly towards the west, passing in front of Armagh Wood, and running thence almost due west to the Ypres-Menin railway, near Hill 60. Beyond the railway the line continued in a general south-westerly direction to St. Eloi, beyond which village the trenches held by the Canadian Corps ended.

The 2nd Canadian Division had gone in on the right of this line. The condition of the trenches held by the 6th Brigade after the fighting at St. Eloi has already been described. On this sector the line, as a continuous defensive position, had simply ceased to exist. Along the rest of the divisional front, and also along that of the 1st Division holding the centre of the Canadian line, conditions were better, although there were very few points at which the positions could be described as good. To the left the newly formed 3rd Division found itself in a particularly vulnerable situation. Here the front line formed the apex of the Salient, and practically the whole length of the trenches held by the Division was open to enfilade fire by hostile artillery located at the "Birdcage." This was a heavily fortified and powerfully armed strong point located in the grounds of Stirling Castle, and so situated that its guns could, at short notice, render most of the front-line trenches untenable. In this sector the real line of resistance was provided by the R trenches, which formed a continuous line from Outpost Farm on the Menin Road to the south corner of Fosse Wood. These trenches roughly conformed to the front-line positions, and were situated, on the average, some 600 yards behind them. A number of communication trenches and switch trenches connected

the two systems, forming in Sanctuary Wood a veritable maze, while other communication trenches led from the R Line to the rearward areas. Behind the R trenches there was no prepared fortified line upon which retreating troops could fall back.

Such was the general position in which the Canadian Corps found itself during the early days of April, 1916. It has been described in some detail because it was here that the troops of the Dominion, acting for the first time as a complete army corps, were destined to meet their next great test.

II.

Upon reaching their billets at Ouderdom the men of the 31st Battalion spent their time in resting, reorganizing and re-equipping. The unit was considerably below war strength, mustering only about 570 of all ranks. Of these, every man was exhausted physically by the ceaseless toil and hardship of the past few days, while many were suffering from shock induced by the fierce bombardments through which they had come.

Conditions in the forward area rendered complete rest for any length of time impossible. The havoc wrought by the enemy guns had to be repaired as far as was possible, and the positions consolidated. On the night of April 13th a working party of 75 men went up to the line under the command of Lieut. Robertson, while on the following night 406 officers and other ranks went forward in snow and driving rain to labour all night in the battered trenches. Working parties from the Battalion were also detailed for duty in the line on the nights of the 15th, 16th and 17th.

The enemy shelled the lines continually, taking toll of the workers. During the five nights in question the Battalion lost 3 killed and 10 wounded, including an officer.

By April 16th the weather had cleared sufficiently to permit of the taking of aerial photographs of the craters. These, when they came to be examined, showed that the Germans held Craters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Craters 1, 6 and 7 were still in Canadian hands, and were occupied by detachments isolated from the units holding the rest of the line.

Meanwhile, screened from observation by his own positions, the enemy was planning and preparing for a further attack upon

the craters and the "Mound." Reinforcements were brought up under cover of darkness, ammunition was accumulated and other necessary measures were taken to organize a determined assault.

On the night of April 18th the 29th Battalion relieved the 26th in the front line. At the same time the 31st Battalion was ordered into brigade support. One company of this unit took up its position at Old French Tunnel, one company at September Post and Voormezeele Fort, one company at Dickebusch and one company at Voormezeele Defences. The machine-gun sections were sent forward into the line, and Battalion Headquarters was established at Scottish Defences.

The condition of the trenches was execrable. Rain had been falling continually for several days, and had rendered them practically impassable and totally unfit to withstand the shell fire with which they had been deluged. The men were soaked to the skin as they took over their stations.

During the morning of April 19th the enemy artillery was more or less quiet, but at 2 o'clock in the afternoon a most intense barrage was opened on Craters 6 and 7. These craters were occupied by detachments of D Company of the 29th Battalion, and of these troops there were, in three hours, only a few survivors.

Battery after battery of the German heavy artillery shifted a fire of deadly accuracy from crater to crater. Time and again the men were buried by shell bursts. Rifles, in spite of breach covers, became choked with mud, and their breech-locks jammed. The toll of dead and wounded increased under the remorseless hammering of high-explosive shells, and runners, dispatched to the rear with calls for assistance, perished in the barrage. Even a carrier pigeon, released from Crater 6, failed to get through.

The terrific bombardment lasted for three hours. Then the infantry attacked, detachments working along trenches adjacent to the craters and spraying their garrisons with machine-gun fire. Some of the men in Crater 7 managed to join those holding Crater 6, where a great fight was put up by the few survivors from the two craters. Those who remained in Crater 7, standing waist deep in mud and with rifles jammed and incapable of use, surrendered to the enemy.

Of the garrisons of the two craters six men, only one of whom was unwounded, managed to get clear under cover of darkness. Assisting one another as best they could through the pitted and muddy waste of the forward area, this handful of survivors managed to reach Voormezeele about midnight. All the rest were either dead or in the hands of the enemy.

All the craters, except No. 1, were now in German possession. They could be held, however, only by artillery fire and a system of patrols. The craters themselves were untenable.

Meanwhile the 31st Battalion had watched from the rear the appalling shell fire which, falling upon the craters, had practically annihilated D Company of the 29th Battalion. At 7.00 p.m. the garrison in Scottish Wood was ordered to "Stand to," and fifteen minutes later orders were received from Brigade Headquarters for two companies of the 31st Battalion to man the Voormezeele Switch, a position in support of the front line. In the rain and inky darkness, A Company was joined in the Old French Tunnel by D Company from Dickebusch. B and C Companies went forward to the Voormezeele Switch, where they were joined by two machine-gun crews from the front line. By 8.30 p.m. the new positions had been taken up. Less than an hour later Col. Bell was ordered forward by the G. O. C. 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade to take command of the centre section of the line and the Voormezeele Defences. This he did immediately, the command of the Battalion devolving upon Major W. H. Hewgill.

At Voormezelle Dugouts Col. Bell found that A Company of the 29th Battalion, under Capt. Gwyne, had been ordered to counter-attack and recover the craters, while C Company, under Major Latta, had received orders to proceed from its position in the Voormezeele Switch and support A Company. Col. Bell immediately ordered half the bombers of the 31st Battalion to support A Company, and at 10 o'clock that night they moved forward from Battalion Headquarters.

Thus at 10.00 p.m. on the night of April 19th the position was as follows:

Of the 29th Battalion, D Company had been wiped out at the craters; B Company was holding the front line trenches, or what was left of them; A Company was moving up to counter-



Top: Courcelette in ruins
Bottom: Road to Death. Sunken Road beyond Courcelette.



attack, with C Company and half the 31st Battalion bombers in support. Of the latter unit, B and C Companies were holding the Voormezeele Switch; A and D Companies were at the Old French Tunnel; half the Machine-gun Section were with B Company of the 29th Battalion and the other half with the troops in the Voormezeele Switch.

At about 11.00 p.m., Brigade Headquarters sent through an order to Major Tait, who, in the absence of Col. Tobin, was in command of the 29th Battalion, to push the attack with all possible dispatch. This officer left immediately to undertake a reconnaissance of the position. While he was forward, the Brigade Commander again phoned through insisting that the attack must be attempted at once. Immediately upon receipt of this order, Col. Bell sent C Company of the 31st Battalion forward to place itself under the orders of Major Tait. In pouring rain and under heavy shell fire the company went forward upon its mission shortly after 1 o'clock on the morning of April 20th.

A heavy and accurate bombardment was still falling on the front line, and Major Tait found it impossible to complete his reconnaissance and plan an attack upon the craters before daylight. C Company of the 31st Battalion were therefore ordered by him to return to Voormezeele Switch, and A and C Companies of the 29th Battalion were also sent back to their original stations. It was 3.00 a.m. when these two companies reported back to Voormezeele, and Col. Bell, as O. C. of the Defences, immediately put through a call to the Brigadier requesting further instructions. The G. O. C. issued orders to the effect that the companies were to return and attack immediately. These orders were passed on to Major Latta, commanding C Company of the 29th Battalion, who collapsed from the effects of exposure and fatigue as he was proceeding to carry out the command to attack.

In the meantime C Company of the 31st Battalion again went forward to assist in the proposed movement against the craters. Having reached Trench 16, it halted to await the arrival of A Company, which had also been detailed to co-operate in the attack of the 29th Battalion.

There was still considerable confusion in the minds of both officers and men as to the locations of the various trenches and

the several craters, while of the position of the enemy they were entirely ignorant. It was, therefore, decided to send out an officers' patrol immediately to try to ascertain the true situation. The result of this reconnaissance, which was only completed just as the dawn began to break, demonstrated clearly the impossibility of any attack that morning. The enemy artillery was accurately registered on the craters, which were also covered by enemy machine guns. The mud was so deep that men taking part in the patrol had been unable to cross the ground without pulling their feet from their waders. For troops to cross such territory in daylight under the muzzles of hostile machine-guns, rifles, and heavy artillery was manifestly impossible.

The information obtained by this reconnaissance was immediately passed back to Col. Bell, who phoned up Brigade Headquarters, described in detail the situation and explained that any attack must inevitably lead to nothing but a futile loss of life. Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen realized from Col. Bell's report that the situation was hopeless, and issued orders for the return of the companies to their original positions.

These operations of the 31st Battalion had not been expensive in the way of casualties, the total losses being ten men wounded. The 29th Battalion had fought gallantly and had suffered severely, losing nearly 80 men, all killed or taken prisoner, in the craters alone.

During the next two days nothing of particular moment occurred. The enemy continued a desultory bombardment of the Canadian positions without doing any very material damage. On April 22nd the 31st Battalion was relieved, with the exception of the machine-gun sections, and marched back to billets at Reninghelst.

Easter Sunday, April 23rd, was spent in resting, a church parade being held in the morning. During the day the weather cleared and the sun broke through. On the following day two officers from each company were sent to inspect the G. H. Q. lines at Scottish Wood. These were found to be in deplorable condition, and hardly fit for occupation. That evening six officers and 300 other ranks went forward and worked all night in an effort to improve matters.

The next few days were warm and clear, and admirably adapted to aerial activity. The Battalion billets were attacked on several occasions by hostile aircraft, which bombed the lines and swept them with machine-gun fire. A machine-gun crew was organized with a view to countering these raids, but was not very effective, neither machine-gun nor rifle fire from the ground being of very much use against aeroplanes.

On April 26th, Major P. J. Daly, D. S. O., was struck off the strength of the 31st Battalion upon being promoted to the command of the 27th Battalion.

The unit left Reninghelst in the early afternoon of April 28th, and moved into billets at Dickebusch, relieving the 19th Battalion. The enemy shelled the lower part of the town as the men went in, and later on three shells burst close to Battalion Headquarters without doing material damage.

On April 29th the demands made on the Battalion for working parties were so great that the whole unit, including the band and all specialist sections, had to be called upon to make up the requisite numbers. The shattered line at St. Eloi required complete reconstruction, and it was upon this work that the men were employed.

At about midnight of the same day two German deserters entered the Canadian lines near Hollandscheschuur Farm, and imparted the information that the enemy intended to launch an attack with gas against the British front from Veirstraat to a point south of Kemmel during the night. The objective of the rumoured attack was Kemmel Hill, which was the best observation post in Belgium remaining in British possession. Orders were at once issued to "Stand to," and shortly after midnight word was received that the gas attack had been launched. This news was confirmed by the sound of heavy firing from the south, and the gas alarm was given. The bombardment did not last long, however, and some time later news came through to the effect that the enemy had attacked E trenches, and captured a position known as the "Bull Ring." Later, a counter-attack by The Royal Welsh Fusiliers was successful, and the original situation restored.

During the last day of April the enemy maintained a steady artillery fire on Dickebusch, shell after shell crashing into the town. Brigade Headquarters was hit, and six men were killed,

while in other parts of the town there were further casualties. That night the enemy again attempted an attack with gas against the Veirstraat Switch, but after an hour's violent bombardment the effort was abandoned.

On the night of May 1st the 31st Battalion relieved the 24th Battalion in Scottish Wood. At 8:00 p.m. on the following day the men again moved forward to occupy the front line, replacing the 25th Battalion.

This tour of the 31st Battalion was comparatively quiet. Some casualties were caused by minenwerfers, and an alarm on the night of May 3rd resulted in the temporary evacuation of Trenches 22 and 23. It was reported at about 10:30 p.m. that the enemy had cut a gap of 50 yards in his wire opposite these trenches, while sounds of mining were heard near Trench 22. Brigade Headquarters was notified of these events, with the result that the withdrawal of the men from this neighbourhood to either flank was ordered as a precautionary measure. Nothing transpired, however, and the following days passed quietly.

On Saturday, May 6th, the unit was relieved by the 29th Battalion and proceeded to brigade reserve in Scottish Wood. Here the lines were subjected to some shelling, which resulted in several casualties. On the following day the Battalion, relieved by the 18th Battalion of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, returned to the billets at Reninghelst.

III.

After sixteen days in the rear, the Battalion returned to brigade reserve on the night of May 22nd, and five days later took over the centre sector of the front line. The new sector was, on the whole, in fairly good condition, but much of the parados needed rebuilding, and the absence of an adequate communication trench to the front line was severely felt.

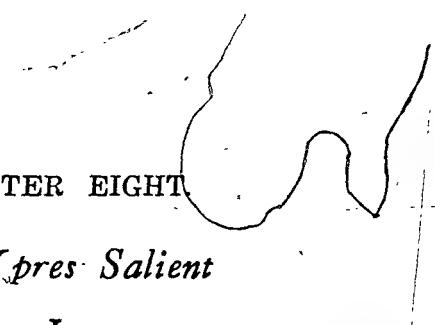
It was during this tour in the trenches that the men of the 31st Battalion witnessed, for the first time, a real aerial duel. At shortly after 9:00 a.m. on May 29th an enemy biplane appeared against the blue of the sky over Voormezeele, and was promptly challenged and engaged by a British machine. For a time the two aeroplanes circled and dived and zoomed about one another,

while the sound of occasional bursts of machine-gun fire came to the watchers below. Then the enemy machine, which appeared to be getting the worst of it, was seen to drop for several hundred feet, right itself, and make off over its own lines. In the meantime, however, the British plane had been struck by shrapnel, and fell at a great speed until it crashed in wreckage near the positions held by the 31st Battalion. Officers and men raced to the fallen machine, and pulled the dead body of its occupant from the wreckage. This proved to be Lieut. E. W. Barrett, R. F. C., who was found to be shot through the arm and leg. It is probable that his wounds caused him to lose consciousness, and that he was killed in the crash.

On May 30th, Battalion Headquarters was visited by General Sir Julian Byng, who was accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Brig.-Gen. Harington. General Byng had succeeded General Anderson to the command of the Canadian Corps on May 28th, and was making a tour of inspection of the lines. Early on the following morning Major-Gen. Turner, V.C., the Divisional Commander, visited the positions held by the Battalion, made a personal inspection of the lines.

Late in the night of the last day of May the 31st Battalion was relieved by the 25th, and went back into divisional reserve at Camp H, Reninghelst. Here the first report of the great and inconclusive naval battle of Jutland was received. The word "inconclusive" is deliberately chosen, as neither side could claim a conclusive victory; yet in its ultimate results it was decisive in so far as naval warfare was concerned. It left Britain the undisputed mistress of the seas, as never again during the war did the German high-seas fleet venture from the protection of its own mine fields to challenge the might of the British battle squadrons.

On June 1st the Battalion received some 20 reinforcements, and on the following day a further draft of 97 men, originally of the 45th Battalion, were taken on the strength from the base at Harve.



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Ypres Salient

I.

The Ypres Salient was a region of destiny for the Canadian forces. It was here, near St. Julien, that the 1st Division had won undying fame by its desperate resistance, when all seemed lost, in April, 1915. It was here that the 2nd Division, in the battle of the craters one year later, was tried and not found wanting. And it was here that the 3rd Division, in the early days of June, 1916, set the final seal to the fighting reputation of the Canadian Corps by its stubborn stand in the face of overwhelming odds.

The engagement, officially known as the Battle of Mount Sorrel, but sometimes referred to as the Battle of Sanctuary Wood, was notable for several reasons. It was the first in which the men of the Dominion participated as a complete army corps; it was the biggest in which Canadian troops had ever fought entirely on their own; and it was characterized by the severest bombardment so far experienced by the Canadian forces.

The line held by the Canadian Corps has already been described in some detail. Of this line the most vulnerable part was probably that held by the 3rd Division on the left. It was also the most critical, as the capture by the enemy of the high ground in the neighbourhood of the Mount Sorrel and Observatory Ridge would have given him command of the whole Salient.

The vulnerability of the positions held by the 3rd Canadian Division was realized by the British Higher Command, and was certainly not unknown to the enemy. The front-line positions were, in many places, little more than an outpost line which could easily be rendered untenable by enemy bombardment. In Sanctuary Wood, in particular, the defences were a constant target for the German heavy artillery and the enfilade fire of their 77 mm. guns. The approaches to the line were commanded, for the most

part, by hostile observation and batteries, which could search practically the whole of the rearward area. Finally the conformation of the front was such that even a local success on the flank would seriously menace the whole of the main line of resistance. This will be clearly realized by a study of the map, Plate II., which shows the positions of the opposing forces before the commencement of the action.

It was probably the precariousness of the positions held by the 3rd Canadian Division which caused the enemy to select this part of the British front for his attack. The German Intelligence knew all about the British preparations for a gigantic offensive on the Somme, and was probably also aware that little weight of artillery would be available for the defence of the Salient in view of these preparations. It was also clear that any considerable success resulting from an attack might seriously embarrass the plans of the British Higher Command in respect to the Somme offensive.

The attack was prepared for with typical German thoroughness. Nine battalions of the 120th, 121st and 125th Regiments of Wurttembergers had been withdrawn from the line early in May to be trained in shock tactics. At the same time the shelling of the back areas had increased in volume, the guns registering methodically day after day on every intersection of communication trenches and on the roads leading from Ypres.

On the morning of June 2nd the attack was inaugurated by the usual morning bombardment. This increased in intensity as additional guns, brought up for the engagement, joined in. By 9.00 o'clock the whole line from the Zillebeke — Zwarteleen Road to the Appendix was shuddering under one of the fiercest concentrated bombardments of artillery of all calibres, trench mortars, aerial torpedoes and bombs of any experienced during the war. Sand bags and dismembered bodies were thrown in all directions; trenches disappeared; trees were uprooted or blown into splinters; wire ceased to exist. The whole earth shook with the violence of the shell-bursts, and the air was dense with the fumes of high explosives, smoke and dust from the up-flung fountains of earth.

The bombardment continued, without diminution or intermission, until 1.00 p.m., by which time the whole of the front line and many of the communication trenches had been blasted, for all

practical purposes, out of existence. Major-Gen. Mercer and Brig.-Gen. Williams, who were on a tour of inspection in the lines, were caught by the barrage, the former being killed and the latter wounded and taken prisoner. The Canadian Corps heavy artillery and the Divisional Artillery attempted counter-battery action; but the weight of metal against them was altogether beyond their power, and their work had no appreciable effect upon the intensity of the enemy bombardment.

The P. P. C. L. I. and the 1st and 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, holding the front line from the Appendix to Armagh Wood, bore the brunt of this terrific shelling. Whole companies were practically wiped out, and the remnants could offer no effective resistance when, shortly after 1.00 p.m., the enemy infantry launched their assault. So intense had been the bombardment that the sending forward of reinforcements had been impossible. The result was that, along considerable portions of the line, the enemy simply walked through without opposition. At other points survivors put up stubborn resistance, a typical instance being afforded by the defence of Warrington Avenue by a handful of the P.P.C.L.I. This trench, which was, in reality, a switch of the R system, was a position of vital importance; and, by holding it, this famous veteran regiment probably prevented the attack from developing into an important success. Indeed, the story of the fighting in Sanctuary Wood on June 2nd is an epic of courage and endurance worthy to rank with any other of the many great achievements of "Princess Pat's," but this is not the place to tell it in detail.

As a result of the first day's fighting the enemy had captured the whole of the Canadian front-line positions from a point between the Loop and the Appendix to Armagh Wood. The Appendix itself was still held by a remnant of No. 2 Company of the P.P.C.L.I., entirely isolated from the rest of the defending forces. Observatory Ridge was in the hands of the enemy, who had penetrated the Canadian positions at this point almost as far as Maple Copse. Altogether the line had been driven in on a front of some 2,000 yards to an average depth of nearly 600 yards.

A counter-attack by the 3rd Division, in conjunction with the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division, was immediately planned against Observatory Ridge, Mount Sorrel and Sanctuary Wood. The 49th

Battalion on the right and the 52nd Battalion on the left, with the 60th Battalion in support, were ordered to attack Sanctuary Wood from the R Line, while the 2nd Brigade advanced against Observatory Ridge. It was, however, found impossible to carry out the assault as planned. Border Lane, leading up to the R trenches at Lover's Walk, was cumbered with dead, wounded and defending troops, and was practically impassable to large bodies of men. The only alternative route forward was along an unfinished trench known as "China Wall," which gave most inadequate protection.

The 49th Battalion began its advance at midnight, moving up across the open ground between Dormy House Lane and Oxford and Bond Streets. In spite of enemy artillery barrage and rifle fire from the flank, the unit advanced steadily, and reached the rendezvous at Lover's Walk at 2.00 a.m. In the meantime, however, the 52nd and 60th Battalions had been met by a tremendous barrage at China Wall, near Half-way House. The former unit was pinned down, and found it impossible to move through the storm of shrapnel and high-explosive shell which deluged the area. The 60th Battalion, after suffering heavy casualties, managed to reach the R Line, together with the remnants of one company of the 52nd, which had managed to get through.

As a result of these events the proposed attack had to be postponed for five hours. Even after this delay, when it became necessary to attack in order to co-operate with the 2nd Brigade on the right, no troops from the 9th Brigade could be used, and the 49th Battalion had to attack alone and without supports. This it did, with great dash and determination, and at the cost of heavy casualties. The attack was held up before it reached the old front line, but was of great value in regaining territory in the neighbourhood of Gournock Road, Warrington Avenue and Bydand Avenue, and in deterring the enemy from following up his successes of the previous day with further attacks.

II.

While these events were taking place to the north of the Canadian positions, the 31st Battalion was in divisional reserve. On the 6th Brigade front all was quiet, but the warning carried by the sound of the terrific gun fire on the morning of June 2nd was

not ignored, and the Battalion received the order to "Stand to," and to prepare to move at short notice.

On June 4th, in spite of partially successful Canadian counter-attacks ably supported by the artillery, the situation along the sector held by the 3rd Division was still critical. During the morning a conference of Commanding Officers was called at Divisional Headquarters to discuss the situation. This was attended, in the absence of Col. Bell, by Major Hewgill, acting O. C. of the unit, who was accompanied by Capt. W. F. Seaton. As a result of this conference the whole of the 6th Brigade, which was at the time in divisional reserve, was ordered to reinforce the 3rd Division. In the early evening of the same day the 31st Battalion moved out of Reninghelst and reached its new quarters at Camp E, in the 3rd Divisional area, at 7.30 p.m. The issue of bombs to the men before marching out of Reninghelst left little doubt as to what the future might bring.

Immediately upon arrival officers and N. C. O.'s were sent out on a special night reconnaissance to locate C trenches leading up to the positions the Battalion was to occupy. During this survey Lieut. R. Downie, Battalion Machine-gun Officer, was wounded.

At 11.00 a.m. on June 5th orders were received from Brigade Headquarters that the 31st Battalion was to relieve the 42nd, 52nd and 60th Battalions. It was 9.30 p.m. when the relief commenced, the 31st Battalion taking over support in the line south of Zouave Wood. To the left front of this position the 28th Battalion held the line from Y Wood through Hooge to Sanctuary Wood.

The relief of the 42nd and 52nd Battalions was carried out without any hitch, and was completed before 3.00 a.m. on June 6th. The relief of the 60th Battalion was delayed, however, by the guides, who had been sent to lead in B Company, losing their way. As a result of this it was after 1.00 o'clock on the morning of the 6th before the Company reached Yeomanry Post. At this point a heavy bombardment further delayed the advance for over an hour, causing the death of Lieut. C. A. Bateman and seriously wounding Lieut. W. R. Wooley-Dod and fifteen other ranks. It was daylight before the barrage died down, and impossible for the men to proceed across the open under the eyes of enemy artillery

observers. B Company was, therefore, ordered to take up a position in the Zillebeke Switch, the relief of the 60th Battalion being thus postponed until the following night.

The situation of the remaining companies of the 31st Battalion was anything but a happy one. These held the R Line from Trench 62, near the junction of the R trenches and the Gourock Road to Trench 69, just north of Zouave Wood. These trenches were at the very apex of the Salient, and the German advance had rendered them virtually front-line positions, protected at some points by outposts. On both flanks and front they were under the direct observation of the enemy occupying the higher ground to the north, east and south of the position, and no movement in or out of the line could be made in daylight without being immediately detected. Enemy artillery, moreover, commanded the trenches from the front and from the flanks, the positions being little more than 1,000 yards away from, and at least 70 feet lower than, the "Birdcage."

The 31st Battalion had only just completed the taking over of these trenches when the enemy commenced a severe shelling of the forward and support lines. He paid special attention to Yeomanry Post, where Battalion Headquarters was located, Bond Street and the adjacent communication trenches. At one period some 100 shells fell in the immediate vicinity of Yeomanry Post in 20 minutes, and one direct hit on a dugout of the 6th Brigade Machine Gun Company killed all the occupants instantly.

At 7.00 a.m. the bombardment became general all along the front from Hill 60 to Hooge. Rifle and machine-gun fire also broke out all along the line until the air was full of flying shell splinters and whistling steel-cased bullets. At about 2.30 p.m. the bombardment reached its height, salvo after salvo of high explosive being poured down upon the Canadian line and the whole rearward area searched with shrapnel.

At 2.45 p.m., while the storm of shells still swept the Canadian positions, the enemy sprung a series of mines under the trenches held by the 28th Battalion in the Village of Hooge, just north of Menin Road. The concussions shook the whole terrain, completely wiping out Trenches 70 and 71 and practically annihilating a whole company of the 28th Battalion.

With the explosion of the mines the barrage increased in violence, and under its cover the enemy assembled his men for the assault. The mine craters were occupied practically without opposition. To the south of the Menin Road attacks were launched against the right of the 28th Battalion, while the men of D Company on the left of the 31st Battalion could see parties of the enemy making short rushes towards their lines and dropping into shell holes for cover.

For fifteen minutes enemy troops assembled and advanced for the attack against the 28th and 31st Battalion positions under cover of a heavy barrage of artillery of all calibres, machine-gun and rifle fire. Huge gaps were blown in the line, and the casualties mounted rapidly.

Attacks were launched in force along the Menin Road and from the Gap towards Zouave Wood. The former was checked by the 28th Battalion, which had several machine guns bearing on the road. Against the 31st Battalion the enemy attacked in lines of section, each section 100 strong and about 30 yards apart, at intervals of about 60 yards. They advanced in short rushes, and showed great determination and courage in the face of the deadly rifle and machine-gun fire which swept their ranks. In spite of heavy losses, they still came on. A few of the enemy nearly reached the trenches before they were shot down, while one officer managed to get the remnants of his section to within 40 yards of the Lewis guns located at the block in the Gourock Road, some 100 yards in advance of the main R trenches, before the party was wiped out.

At 4.00 p.m. a second attack was launched against the positions occupied by the 31st Battalion, but made little progress. Before the enemy troops had advanced a hundred yards the attack was beaten back by rapid rifle fire, the enemy losing nearly half of his men in a few minutes. The remainder wavered and broke back to their own lines.

In the meantime Battalion Headquarters had received information from the officer in command of the 60th Battalion to the effect that the enemy was advancing in column against his front. A platoon of the reserve company of the 31st Battalion was immediately ordered up to reinforce the left of the 60th. At about

the same time Capt. P. B. R. Tucker, commanding D Company on the left of the 31st Battalion frontage, reported that his casualties were so severe that his position was weak. He further reported that his ammunition reserve had been exploded by shell fire, and that supplies were running low. Lieut. E. F. Pinkham, with two platoons of B Company, immediately went forward from the Zillebeke Switch with extra ammunition to reinforce D Company.

These reinforcements to the line seriously depleted the reserves available for the 31st Battalion. In addition to this, the companies in the line itself were much weakened by casualties, while the situation was rendered dangerous by the massing of enemy troops in front of the Canadian positions. A considerable concentration of the Wurtembergers was reported in the craters on the front originally held by the 28th Battalion, while there was also evidence of the assembly of troops in an old trench in front of Trenches 68 R and 69 R, held by the 31st Battalion, and Trench 70 R, opposite the 28th Battalion lines.

It was clear that these conditions possessed elements of danger which might prove critical, and it became necessary to obtain, if possible, more exact details of the disposition of the enemy. In an effort to obtain such information, Lieuts. J. V. Richards and J. T. L. Sara were sent out from the right and left respectively to reconnoitre and to ascertain the numbers and disposition of the enemy. After an extended reconnaissance both officers reported back that they could see the Germans gathering to the immediate front of the Battalion line. They further stated that many of them were without rifles, and presumably, acting as bombers. In the light of these reports it appeared fairly certain that a further attack was in preparation against the trenches held by the 31st and 60th Battalions. Reinforcements were applied for to Brigade, and one and a half companies of the 27th Battalion were sent forward. These troops replaced the remaining men of the 31st Battalion occupying Zillebeke Switch, who, in turn, moved forward to relieve the 60th Battalion.

III.

Nightfall brought, to the exhausted men in the trenches, quietness and a welcome respite, but little rest. The day's

bombardment had been very severe, and the damage done to front-line and communication trenches was such that days of work would be required to repair it. All that could be done during the night, however, to strengthen the position and improve protection was accomplished by the weary troops.

The day's casualties of the 31st Battalion had been heavy, and numbered 23 killed, 61 wounded and 2 missing, or more than 10 per cent of the total strength of the Battalion at that time.

The Germans had reason that night to congratulate themselves. They had not succeeded in breaking through, although they had come very near to doing so; they may not have obtained all their objectives; but Hooge was in their hands, Mount Sorrel and Observatory Ridge. They now occupied all the high ground in the neighbourhood, and appeared to have complete dominance of the whole position.

Their success was well merited, and might have been much greater had it not been for the stubborn defence of the Canadian Corps in general and the P. P. C. L. I. in particular. The Wurttembergers had fought with great courage and determination, and the artillery barrage had been not only of unprecedented severity, but of very great accuracy. The work, indeed, of both the defending and attacking forces in this engagement is deserving of the highest praise.

The end, however, was not yet. The Canadian Corps never admitted defeat, and would not accept even a partial reverse and the loss of valuable ground without a big effort to retrieve such loss.

As soon as the positions to which the Canadians had fallen back had been secured and the new line stabilized, preparations for a counter-attack, with a view to regaining the lost ground, were commenced. Every gun which could possibly be spared by neighbouring units, British and Belgian as well as Canadian, was borrowed and placed in position to the rear of the line. Day by day a steady ranging fire was carried out and enemy positions bracketed. The 2nd Division was relieved at St. Eloi by the 9th British Brigade and took over ground in the northern sector, releasing the 1st Division to rest and to prepare for the attack.

IV.

Meanwhile, for the time being, the 31st Battalion remained in position. After a quiet night, during which as much work as was possible was done on the battered trenches, the dawn of June 7th was ushered in by a resumption of German artillery activity. All day the guns pounded away steadily at the Canadian trenches, and casualties continued to be sent back. That day the enemy had six observation balloons up, and any movement of troops by daylight was impossible. The Battalion casualties amounted, during the day, to 7 killed and 53 wounded.

A laudatory communication was received at Battalion Headquarters and promulgated to the men. It read as follows:

"The Army Commander wishes me to convey to you his appreciation of the splendid fight of the 28th and 31st Battalions yesterday. He considers that everything was done that could have been done.

"(Sgd.) Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner.
"7th June, 1916."

During the following day the enemy continued a steady bombardment of the Battalion positions, causing further casualties and creating further havoc to the trenches. During the afternoon the weather, which had been fine since the beginning of the month, broke in a series of heavy showers, while thickening clouds gave promise of further rain.

That night the Battalion was relieved by the 27th Battalion, and reached Ypres at 2.00 a.m., taking over the old infantry and cavalry barracks for billets.

This was the first time that the 31st Battalion had visited the famous old Flemish town, celebrated in pre-war times for its fine buildings, beautiful architecture and reposeful dignity. When the men of the 31st Battalion first viewed its streets it looked more like a rubble heap than a city. Houses everywhere were roofless, and many had been reduced to mere piles of tumbled bricks; of once fine buildings nothing remained but jagged fragments of wall; streets and squares and quiet gardens were pitted with great shell holes and littered with the debris of destruction. The

civilian population had been replaced by soldiers, who lived in cellars and dugouts.

At Ypres the 31st Battalion was given a few days in which to rest and refit. It was during these days of rest that news was received of the death of Lord Kitchener, who had been drowned off the Orkneys when the cruiser "Hampshire," upon which he was proceeding to Russia, struck a mine and sank.

Whatever history may have to say of the greatness and limitations of Lord Kitchener, there is no denying that his was one of the great outstanding personalities of the war. It was his prestige which called into being and organized the great New Army of Britain — "Kitchener's Blokes"; it was he who realized more clearly than any other British leader the magnitude of the task involved in defeating the Germans, and the probable duration of the war. To the ordinary British soldier he was almost an Olympian figure — if not loved, at least admired and believed in as a god. News of his death came as a great shock to the troops in France, and was an enormous loss to the British cause.

News was also received at this time that Sergt. S. Rees and Lance-Cpl. W. Dalziel (since deceased), who had later been promoted to the rank of Sergeant, had been awarded the D. C. M. for gallantry in the field during the action of June 6th. Honours of the King's Birthday List were also announced, it being recorded in orders for June 4th that:

The Distinguished Conduct Medal was awarded to No. 79113, Sergt. D. McRae for: — At 4.00 p.m. on the 29th of December, 1915, an enemy torpedo fell on the machine-gun emplacement in H. 1 trench, in which ten men were taking cover. It was completely wrecked, burying dead and wounded in the debris. Notwithstanding the fact that a breach had been made in the parapet by the enemy, Sergt. D. McRae was the first man on the spot and immediately commenced digging the men out at great personal risk, and continued to do so until all the men had been taken out. He showed great coolness and energy."

"To No. 79754, Corp. H. P. Morgan (now Lieutenant), the Military Medal awarded for: — On December 4th, 1915, Private Wishart was shot in the leg, while trying to rescue

Corpl. Haslam, who had been shot in the head. Corpl. H. P. Morgan at great personal risk, went out and brought in Pte. Wishart to cover, being exposed to enemy fire for about 100 yards. He also displayed great bravery in rescuing the wounded in C. 4, when the machine-gun emplacement was destroyed by trench mortars. As corporal in charge of the company scouts, he has done excellent work in reconnaissance and scouting, and his services as such have been invaluable to the company."

V.

The 31st Battalion left Ypres in drizzling rain on the night of June 11th, and relieved the 27th Battalion in the centre subsection south of Hooge. The trenches occupied by the unit were not the new ones which had been dug after the Corps had lost its positions on June 2nd, but another line some 60 yards to the rear.

On the following day the enemy bombarded the Battalion positions remorselessly. At first much ammunition was wasted on the unoccupied forward trench system, and it was only when the barrage was lifted to what the enemy supposed were the support trenches that casualties occurred. Then, for a time, matters became decidedly hot. Shells of all calibres burst in the line in rapid succession, blowing great gaps in the trenches and scattering the sand bags in all directions. One shell, falling in Trench 63 where two Colt machine guns were mounted, put both guns out of action and wiped out one of the crews.

Gradually the trenches were flattened out under the continual hammering, and many of the men were compelled to take refuge in shell holes. Flying shell splinters took toll of the Battalion, and shell-bursts blew men to pulp. All the time the rain lashed down, drenching the troops, converting the whole terrain to a muddy waste and adding another difficulty to the projected counter-attack upon the enemy's positions.

Meanwhile the artillery to the rear of the Canadian lines had not been idle. As already stated, this had been greatly reinforced by borrowed batteries, and for some days a systematic and steady bombardment of the enemy's positions had been maintained. On June 12th this bombardment lasted from 7:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.,

when a terrific barrage was brought down on the German lines in the last light of day.

Under cover of darkness the veteran 1st Division moved forward and took over their assembly positions from the 2nd Division in preparation for the attack against Mount Sorrel and Observatory Ridge. The 6th Brigade was now holding the most northerly portion of the Canadian line from the Menin Road to the junction of Zouave and Sanctuary Woods. The position of the 31st Battalion was on the extreme right of the Brigade frontage, its line running along the south of Zouave Wood to Sanctuary Wood.

The mission of the 6th Brigade was to carry out a smoke demonstration to confuse the enemy and lead him to believe that the objective of attack was the village of Hooge.

Shortly after midnight the Canadian artillery again opened a heavy bombardment against the enemy positions of Mount Sorrel, Observatory Ridge and Sanctuary Wood. For an hour and a half the sweating crews of every available gun loaded, fired and sponged at top speed and without intermission, plastering the enemy lines with high explosive and shrapnel.

At 1.30 a.m. smoke was released from the 6th Brigade trenches, accompanied by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. On the left of the Canadian positions a British brigade made a demonstration with gas; to the right of the 6th Brigade line the attacking battalions commenced to move forward in the darkness.

It soon became apparent that the smoke screen put up by the 6th Brigade had fulfilled its purpose of convincing the Germans that the attack would be launched from this part of the line. In a very short time a concentrated bombardment was brought down all along the Brigade front. The 31st Battalion positions came in for a very severe shelling, particularly the trenches occupied by B and C Companies stationed on the north-western edge of Sanctuary Wood. Here the men were driven from their trenches to take refuge in shell holes, and the trenches themselves were entirely flattened out by shell fire.

While the northern portion of the Canadian line was still receiving most of the attention of the hostile artillery, the 1st Division launched its attack further south. The advance was pushed forward with great dash and determination, and the operation was

everywhere successful. Observatory Ridge and Mount Sorrel were recaptured and the Germans, on this sector, were driven back to, approximately, their old positions.

On the following day such work as was possible was carried out upon the flattened trenches of the 31st Battalion. During daylight, however, and under enemy observation, nothing could be done in many parts of the line, and the men were pinned down in shell holes all day. That night patrols were sent out to guard the battered trenches which, in many places, offered no protection whatever to a garrison. One of these patrols noticed that the block put in at Gourock Road had been blown up during the bombardment of the 13th, and a party of men, under Lieut. C. B. Hornby, was immediately dispatched to put in a second block.

The day of the 14th was wet and raw, and the shell holes and trenches were fast becoming water-logged. Enemy artillery continued to bombard the Canadian positions throughout the day, and working parties appeared along the Hooge ridge. Upon the latter the snipers of the 31st Battalion kept up a steady fire all the time that they remained in sight.

That night the Battalion was replaced by the 27th Battalion, the relief not being completed until 2.00 a.m. on the 15th. By this time the men were completely exhausted. Although their tour in the line had not been a long one, it had been very strenuous. The enemy shelling had been exceedingly heavy and deadly in its accuracy. There had been no respite for sleep and little chance of rest, while the continual rain had added to the misery of the men. Casualties had again been heavy, 13 men having been killed and 52 wounded.

The Battalion returned to its original billets in Ypres, where it was met by a draft of 22 men to replenish in some small measure its depleted ranks. During the day news was received to the effect that the Brigade was to return to its old positions at Kemmel. The fighting in the Hooge area had been very severe, the bombardments had been terrific, the protection poor and the casualties heavy. The Canadian Corps, under tremendous pressure, had lost ground and yielded up positions which had never been strong, but in the end the men of the Dominion had thrust the enemy back to his old trenches. And there was no regret at leaving the Ypres Salient.

CHAPTER NINE.

Kemmel, the "Bluff" and Vierstraat

I.

The 31st Battalion had now been in France for nine months and at the front for 258 days. Of this total, 124 days had been spent in the line, 62 days in brigade reserve, 62 days in divisional reserve and 10 days in corps reserve. Total casualties had amounted to 630 of all ranks, or considerably more than half the original strength of the Battalion. Of these casualties 130 had been killed or had died of wounds, 495 had been wounded and 4 were missing, while one had been unofficially reported a prisoner of war.

The unit could consider itself definitely, by this time, as being of the veteran class. It had been through some heavy fighting and had experienced shell fire of the most furious nature; it had held its ground under conditions of extreme difficulty, had suffered great hardships and discomforts and had acquitted itself on all occasions in a manner worthy of the highest traditions of the British soldier.

The personnel of the Battalion had been changing gradually during the whole of the nine months it had been in France, but its spirit had remained unchanged. Officers, N.C.O.'s and men had dropped out of the ranks, to be replaced by drafts from reserve units. Of the 1,023 original members who had sailed from England on September 18th, 1915, little more than one-half still answered roll-call.

II.

Upon leaving Ypres the 31st Battalion proceeded by motor-bus to Quebec Camp, formerly Camp H at Reninghelst. Here Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner, V.C. addressed the men and thanked them for their gallant conduct during the tour at Hooge and for their

fortitude under the long and remorseless shelling. On June 17th the Battalion went into intensive training, which lasted until the 20th, the bombers using live bombs during their instruction and all arms attending a gas demonstraton at the Divisional Grenade School.

On Sunday, June 18th, a particularly keen football match was played by the Battalion against the 16th Lancers, in which the Canadian unit was victorious over the British regiment by two goals to one. Football matches, and other games and sports, were regular feature of every period in reserve when circumstances permitted, and were invaluable in keeping up the morale of the men and helping them to throw off the effects of a heavy action.

Late on the morning of the 19th, orders arrived for the 6th Brigade to relieve the 8th British Brigade in the centre section of the line at St. Eloi. Five officers and five N. C. O.'s of the 31st Battalion were ordered forward to survey the sector, and at 9.00 p.m. on the 20th the relief commenced. The unit occupied the positions vacated by the 7th Shropshire Light Infantry in brigade support at Scottish Wood, the relief being completed shortly after midnight.

The first few days of the tour passed quietly, but on June 24th the enemy opened a sharp barrage of shrapnel against the reserves in Dickebusch. Late that same night Lieut. D. J. M. Campbell took out a patrol to ascertain the condition of the trenches and craters in the enemy's hands. This reconnaissance was very successful, and obtained much valuable information. It ascertained that the enemy had constructed a new trench in front of Craters 2, 3, 4 and 5. This trench was not heavily garrisoned, but contained one or two well-placed machine guns. It was also ascertained that Crater 4 was well wired, and that a machine gun was located in Crater No. 5.

A and B Companies, at Scottish Wood, came in for a spell of artillery fire on the 25th, and on the following day the enemy kept up a continual fire of high explosive shells all day, searching for a battery stationed at the edge of the wood.

The usual nightly working parties were discontinued on June 26th owing to impending operations against the craters. The relief of the Battalion, which should have taken place that night, was also postponed for the same reason, and to the unlimited dis-

gust of the men. It is a curious fact, which perhaps the psychologists can explain, that troops who will endure the horrors of the severest action quite cheerfully will grouse and grumble in terms of most regrettable phraseology if their term in even the quietest of sectors is prolonged.

On the 27th the men of the Battalion watched British aeroplanes shoot down four enemy observation balloons. In spite of the German anti-aircraft guns, the machines manoeuvred about the balloons in order to get into position for a favourable burst of fire, and one by one the gas envelopes were hit, ignited and brought down in flames. "Sausage hunting" was a favourite sport of the Royal Air Force, and did much to hamper enemy artillery observation.

On the night of June 27th/28th, the 27th Battalion, assisted by the 28th, made a raid upon the enemy's lines which was barren of results in so far as prisoners were concerned. On the following night the 31st Battalion was relieved, and went to Ontario Camp, formerly Camp E, at Reninghelst. Here 27 reinforcements joined the unit and were posted to the various companies.

On Dominion Day, July 1st, the Battalion was inspected by the Divisional Commander, Major-Gen. R. E. W. Turner, V.C., who was accompanied by Brig.-Gen. Radcliffe of the Corps Staff and Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, the Brigade Commander. In the afternoon an athletic sports meeting was organized. This was a complete success, owing to the fine weather and the number of competitors in the various events. On this day, also, orders contained the announcement that all company commanders had been given their majorities.

Warning having been received that the Battalion would go into the line at the "Bluff" sector on the night of July 3rd, officers and N. C. O.'s were dispatched to look over the positions. The relief was, however, postponed for twenty-four hours, and the unit did not go into the line until the night of July 4th.

It was wet and sultry when the 31st Battalion commenced the relief of the 18th Battalion of the 4th Brigade at the "Bluff" and International Trench. The position was found to be in good condition, with deep trenches and six good communication trenches leading into the line. This made the carrying out of reliefs, the

sending up of reinforcements and the transport of supplies comparatively simple, in striking contrast to the conditions which had been experienced at St. Eloi and Hooge.

Broadly speaking, this tour of the Battalion in the line was a quiet one. Enemy snipers were continually on the alert, causing considerable annoyance and several casualties; to show one's head above the parapet in daylight was to invite death, so accurate was the shooting. As a counter measure, sniping posts were established in the Battalion lines, and the enemy received payment of his own coin. Sporadic bombardments by trench mortars also fell upon the positions every day; and on the 9th an artillery bombardment of considerable intensity was brought down upon the line which did material damage, killing one man and wounding nine others. Patrols were out continually every night, but the enemy appeared to be quiet, and no working parties or hostile patrols were encountered.

On July 5th, just as the twilight commenced to fall, Lieut. J. V. Richards started out upon a reconnaissance towards a crater, which had not been occupied. He was observed by a German sniper, who watched his movements and finally shot him dead.

During the nights working parties managed to get a considerable amount of wire out in spite of enemy vigilance, and other minor improvements were made in the defences.

Lieuts. J. H. L'Amy and E. A. Finn left the unit on the 7th, taking with them 20 other ranks, to form a permanent working party. These officers were replaced two days later by Lieuts. A. H. Living and G. H. Scott from the 56th Canadian Reserve Battalion in England.

On July 12th the unit was relieved by the 29th Battalion and went back into rest at Micmac Camp, formerly Camp A, to the south-west of Dickebusch.

III.

By this time, away to the south, the relentless fighting of the great Battle of the Somme was raging, and was absorbing every British unit on the Western Front that could be spared from the duty of holding the line. As a result of this the 50th British Division received orders to withdraw the brigade holding the

Vierstraat sector of its line and to send it down to the Somme. The 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, in its turn, was ordered to occupy the Vierstraat sector in place of the British brigade.

The move was scheduled for the night of July 21st, and company officers and specialists of the 31st Battalion were immediately dispatched to La Clytte to look over the positions to be occupied by the unit. Under orders to be in La Clytte by 4.00 p.m., the Battalion left Micmac Camp at 2 o'clock. As dusk fell the relief commenced, the Alberta troops taking over the positions of the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers in the main N trenches in the right subsection of the Vierstraat sector.

In the meantime, while resting in Micmac Camp, the 31st Battalion had taken on strength some 200 reinforcements from the 56th and 66th Reserve Battalions. This addition to the greatly depleted ranks of the unit was a considerable relief to Headquarters, although it still left the unit below war strength.

The enemy artillery was quiet as the Battalion went into the line, but his snipers and trench mortars were troublesome. The tour cost the unit eleven casualties as a result of these activities, one killed and ten wounded. The trenches were in excellent condition, but Battalion Headquarters was situated so far to the rear that it took over four hours to make a complete inspection of the line.

On the 23rd the Battalion again left the line and proceeded to Ontario Camp at Reninghelst, its place being taken by the 24th Battalion of the 5th Brigade. Days of intensive training followed, and on July 27th the whole Battalion undertook a route march of 13 miles in full marching order. The day was hot and sultry, the roads dusty, and, as usual towards the end of a march, the column was opening and closing like a concertina; but only one man fell out of the perspiring ranks. Two days later the Battalion acted as advance guard in a brigade tactical route march, leaving camp at 7.30 a.m. Major Hewgill was in command of the main guard, and the column proceeded via Reninghelst and New Abeele Road to a position near Boeschepe. Here signalling experiments in conjunction with aeroplanes were carried out with ground sheets and code letters, the aeroplanes picking up the messages and carrying them to higher commands. The experiment proved quite successful. At noon the men had dinner in a field near the Boeschepe—Berthen Road, and later marched back to camp via Westoutre.

The Battalion was ordered back to the line on July 31st. During the afternoon of that day the recently-joined drafts were inspected by Brig.-Gen. Ketchen and subsequently the following N.C.O.'s were promoted to the rank of lieutenant: T. W. Law, J. L. McPherson, J. F. Clement and F. M. Holden. Lieut. W. L. Hardiman was posted from the 31st Battalion to the 6th Brigade Machine Gun Company.

The relief of the 20th Battalion in the Voormezeele sector of the St. Eloi trenches was completed, with the exception of the Machine-gun Sections, by 12.30 a.m. on August 1st. A longer frontage than that which had been held by the 20th Battalion had been allotted to the 31st, the latter being required to take over an additional trench on each flank. This delayed the relief of the machine gunners as, owing to the extended frontage, it became necessary for the 31st Battalion to borrow four more guns and organize their crews.

The next morning was foggy, with very poor visibility, but in making his rounds of the positions the Officer Commanding observed, through a periscope, two of the enemy moving about in "No Man's Land." Rifle fire was brought to bear, and one of the men was seen to fall about 50 yards in front of the enemy lines. The spot was kept under observation all day, and as soon as darkness fell Sergt.-Major H. Colson and Cpl. Cameron, of C Company climbed the parapet and went out to try to obtain the identity badges of the fallen man. Moving slowly and carefully, the two Canadians approached the spot, and there encountered a party of five or six Germans, who had come out to recover the body. The enemy at once opened fire and threw hand grenades, wounding Sergt.-Major Colson so badly that he died within a few minutes. His comrade, keeping low and moving swiftly, regained the line. The death of its senior N. C. O. was a great loss to C Company, as Colson had proved himself to be extremely capable and was well liked by the men.

Throughout this tour the enemy shelled the Battalion lines during the day, and at night his infantry had many patrols out. The days were warm and bright, but the mornings were foggy and, screened by the mist, much movement took place in "No Man's Land." Canadian fighting patrols were continually on the move while darkness or the morning mist lasted.

On the night of August 3rd Lieut. J. T. L. Sara took out a fighting patrol with the intention of finding and trying conclusions with one of the enemy's parties. In this he was successful. The clash came suddenly, and the fight was short and sharp. In the midst of the exchange of shots Lieut. Sara was seen to collapse. Pte. Benwell, of A Company, was also shot down and instantly killed as he moved to his officer's assistance, and another of the party was wounded as the men carried Lieut. Sara back to the lines. Upon examination, it was found that the Scout Officer had been shot through the head, but was still breathing. He was immediately rushed back to No. 10 Casualty Clearing Station, but died on the following day to the deep regret of the whole Battalion.

All day long on August 3rd sounds of mining had been heard in Trench 23, and as evening fell instructions arrived from Brigade Headquarters for the necessary precautions to be taken. Lieut. H. P. Morgan was ordered, therefore, to take 50 men to an old reclaimed trench in the rear of Trench 23 to act as a support in the event of the mine being sprung.

At about 5.45 p.m. on the 4th the Germans commenced shelling the front line with minenwerfers, and four hours later exploded a small mine near Crater 3. This blew back and did considerable damage to the enemy's own trench, blowing breaches in the parapet. An exciting time ensued as the Battalion snipers sought to take full advantage of the gaps in the enemy lines and to shoot down the men who were making frantic efforts to cover the breaches with sandbags.

All that night hostile machine guns from Craters 3 and 5 swept the lines. In the meantime patrols of the 31st Battalion, out in front of the trenches, lay and listened to the activities proceeding in Crater 3. Trolleys were heard moving backwards and forwards between the crater and the rear, and it sounded as if the tramway ran right up into the crater itself. There seemed little doubt that the enemy was mining deeply under the Canadian positions.

Additional officer reinforcements reported to the Battalion on August 6th in the persons of Major A. C. Wooley-Dod, Major J. S. Gilker, Capt. E. E. Bailey, Capt. A. L. B. Johnson, Capt. G. E. Powis and Capt. H. Sawley.

The Brigade Commander visited the lines on the following day for a conference with Col. Bell regarding a proposed raid which

was to be made on the night of the 7th. Accompanied by Major H. M. Splane, gunner officers of the various batteries which covered the line and others concerned in the projected operation, the two senior officers made an inspection of the positions from which it was proposed to launch the raid, and made the necessary plans for carrying it out.

The objective of the attack was to secure prisoners for the purposes of identification and information, and to weaken the enemy's morale. Major H. M. Splane was appointed to command the raiding troops, accompanied by Capt. Jewitt, Lieut. Morgan and 24 other ranks divided into three sections of 8 men.

The raid was well planned and carefully organized, and every precaution which foresight could suggest was taken to insure its success. All badges, papers and letters were removed from the persons of those selected to participate in the attack, so as to render identification difficult should any of the men fall into the hands of the enemy. Signals were arranged and co-operation of artillery units organized. The terrain to be covered was carefully reconnoitered, and the wire removed opposite the position from which the raid was to leave the Canadian trenches. The raid was to be made on Crater 5, and was to involve a sudden dash upon the crater; the capture of prisoners, should this be possible; and the immediate return of the party to its own lines. It was estimated that the whole operation would be completed in five minutes.

The supporting artillery commenced the bombardment at 1.00 p.m. on August 7th, 12-inch and 6-inch shells, as well as those of smaller calibre, being poured on Craters 2, 3, 4 and 5, as well as on the enemy front-line trenches in the vicinity. Huge gaps were torn in the parapets, wire entanglements were blown up, and in places the trenches were flattened out. Unfortunately Crater 5, which should not have been severely shelled, came in for too much attention by the artillery, with the result that the enemy anticipated the projected assault and made arrangements for its reception.

The assembly position of the raiding party was an old trench running parallel to the German front line. Here, a few minutes before 11.00 p.m. the men assembled, and the "Ready" signal was sent back by buzzer to the report centre. A moment later the

signal "Fire" was sent over the wire, and simultaneously a parachute flare soared up from Selby Trench. At this signal the leading section leapt from the trench and dashed for the enemy line. When within twenty yards of it this section lay down to await the arrival of the next section.

The sound of voices from the immediate front of the attacking party gave warning that the enemy was not only on the alert, but was fully prepared for the raid. With the first section was an interpreter, Pte. A. S. A. Taylor. Creeping forward nearer the enemy, he was able to overhear what was said, and caught sentences such as:—"Here they are!" "How many are there?" "I don't know, but I am sure there are more than twenty."

It was clear that the element of surprise, so vital to the successs of adventures of this nature, was lacking, and to remove all doubt on this point, the enemy commenced to bomb and fire at the leading section of the attackers. By this time Capt. Jewitt and Lieut. Morgan had crept forward. They held a hurried consultation with the interpreter, who informed them of what he had overheard. Meanwhile bullets were whistling and bombs were dropping unpleasently near. Very wisely, in view of the enemy preparedness, and of the fact that the crater appeared to be held in considerable force, it was decided to withdraw. The raid, which was the first to be attempted by the 31st Battalion, had failed, to the keen disappointment of the whole unit. Capt. Jewitt and some 15 other ranks were wounded in the action, and were sent back to the Casualty Clearing Station for attention.

On the following night the Battalion was relieved in the line by the 29th Battalion. A and B Companies proceeded direct to Micmac Camp, while C and D Companies, under the command of Major Hewgill, were stationed at Voormezeele and Scottish Wood respectively.

As the men filed out of the line they could hear heavy firing to the north and see the S.O.S. signals flaring against the cloudy sky, while gas alarms went shrieking down the line. It was afterwards learned that the Germans had released gas against the British troops in the Salient, causing a good many casualties.

IV.

Little of particular note occurred until August 14th, when the King passed through the Battalion transport lines on his way to inspect the 25th Canadian Battalion at Reninghelst.

Two days later the 31st Battalion went into divisional reserve at Ontario Camp. The enemy shelled the men upon their departure for the rearward area, but caused no casualties. While in reserve, further reinforcements arrived, and reorganization, re-equipment and the inevitable training were proceeded with. The weather was extremely hot, and made the hard work doubly hard. Few, however, of those who had experienced the rain and mud of a Flanders' winter were heard to complain of the heat.

By this time it was already known that the Canadian Corps was destined for the Somme, where the great offensive was being pushed forward with remorseless determination and at the cost of tremendous casualties. At Ontario Camp the 31st Battalion was preparing for the march south, and for the ordeal which lay beyond. Other Canadian units, of all arms, were doing the same thing throughout the area occupied by the men of the Dominion.

On August 18th the Battalion paraded, with the rest of the 6th Brigade, for inspection by General Sir Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Defence. Typical Canadian inspection weather prevailed, and it rained in torrents all the time the parade lasted.

At 8.50 a.m. on Sunday, August 20th, 1916, after a thorough and detailed inspection, the 31st Battalion moved out of Ontario Camp, Reninghelst, on the first stage of its journey to the Somme.

By this time the whole of the Canadian Corps was on the move, or preparing to move. Approximately 65,000 troops, including infantry, artillery, army medical services, army service corps, ordinance corps, engineers, staff and headquarters personnel and miscellaneous details were affected.

For these men of the Dominion the immediate future, in the blood-drenched valley of the Somme, held trials of courage and endurance and determination greater than any that had gone before; it held for the Corps honours and glory which must prove an inspiration to many future generations of Canadians; and it held for many — too many — of these 65,000 men wounds and mutila-

tion and death. The honours were destined to be bought at a high price in blood and life.

With the 6th Brigade marched the 6th Field Ambulance, the 4th Field Company, Canadian Engineers, the Brigade Machine Gun Company and the Stokes Mortar Batteries. The 31st Battalion brought up the rear of the Brigade column, and suffered throughout the marches from the clouds of dust thrown up by the troops in front and from the alternate halts and haste caused by the opening and closing up of a long column of troops on the march.

The route followed was via Steenvoorde, Bollezeele and Ganspette to the Second Army training area near Tilques. The first night of the march was spent in billets at Steenvoorde, and it was here that the Battalion lost its Adjutant, Lieut. W. F. Seaton, who was thrown from his horse and received internal injuries which necessitated his removal to hospital.

At Bollezeele the 31st Battalion remained for six clear days. The men were comfortably billeted in the houses and cottages of this pretty little village, in which there were few troops except those of the Alberta unit. The days were spent in training, and in practising with the Lee Enfield rifles, which had been issued to the men shortly after their arrival. Target practice with the new weapon did not yield such good results as had been obtained with the Ross. This was no doubt partly due to the fact that the men were not yet used to it, and partly because the Ross, with all its faults, was an excellent range rifle. Nevertheless, the change was welcomed by the men with jubilation. Under war conditions the Canadian rifle, with its complex and easily-jammed breech mechanism, had been a source of danger on more than one occasion; and, as in the case of the detachment of the 29th Battalion in Crater 7 on April 19th, had sometimes left men defenceless in the face of the enemy.

While at Bollezeele five officers and twenty men of the 2nd Canadian Entrenching Battalion joined the 31st, bringing the strength of the unit up to 50 officers and 847 other ranks. On August 27th, however, Capt. W. W. Piper left the Battalion under order for England, where his services were required as bombing instructor.

The Battalion reached Tilques on August 29th, in pouring rain, and at once went into training of the most strenuous nature. The

syllabus called for eight hours' work a day, all marches to be undertaken in full marching order. It also included exercises in such tactics as company in attack and battalion in attack, as well as musketry practice, to get the men accustomed to their new rifles. Night manoeuvres were also carried out, and all specialist sections were given training to fit them for the new type of warfare in which they were about to engage.

Most of the war experience of the 1st Canadian Division and, apart from raids and comparatively small local attacks, the whole of the experience of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, had been in the sphere of defensive warfare. They had been given positions to hold, and they had held them. The most determined efforts of the enemy had always failed to break the Canadian line, and had seldom been successful in gaining ground. Now, however, the Corps was to take part in a great offensive, and to experience fighting of an entirely different nature to that which the troops had become accustomed. Officers, N.C.O.'s and men worked with a whole-hearted co-operation to make the most of the limited time available in fitting themselves to meet the new conditions.

While at Tilques the 31st Battalion was issued with four additional Lewis machine guns, and crews were organized and trained. Also all those veterans who had been wounded and had subsequently rejoined the unit were issued with "wound stripes" of gold braid to wear on the left forearm of their tunics.

At 9.00 p.m. on September 4th the move to the south was resumed. A Company and the Battalion Transport left camp for St. Omer, going by way of Watten. Two hours later the rest of the unit commenced its march, proceeding via St. Martin Au Laert, and reaching St. Omer at 3.45 a.m. on the following morning, in pouring rain. Shortly after 5.00 a.m. the Battalion entrained, with all its transport, horses, mules and machine guns, and commenced its journey to "some southern point."

V.

The 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade had won for itself, by this time, the title of "The Iron Sixth." In No. 3 Canadian General Hospital, at Boulogne, Corp. W. T. H. Cripps, of the 28th Battalion, had composed a poem bearing this title. Not infrequently, as they

marched, the men of the Brigade sang this poem, which had been set to music. The poem is reproduced here because it is felt that no history of a unit of "The Iron Sixth" would be complete without these lines dedicated to the Brigade by one of its members. The verses follow:

"Canada's Golden Gateway sent forth her gallant sons
Who proudly marched with smile and song to face the
German guns;
Where'er their duty called them, 'twas there they won their
fame,
And on the Scroll of Honour is the TWENTY-SEVENTH'S
name.

"Yet farther west, and still her sons is Canada sending out,
The TWENTY-EIGHTH Battalion fights with never a
fear or doubt;
From the head of Lake Superior and the Province of Golden
Wheat,
The boys are marching 'gainst the foe with never falt'ring
feet.

"B. C. has sent her quota, and the TWENTY-NINTH is there,
Broad-chested, stalwart manhood, out just to do and dare;
Vancouver's boys are marching with steady step and true,
Determined all to "play the game," and see the whole thing
through.

"A breath from Calgary's city, flung where the fight is worst,
Still more of Canada's manhood in the gallant THIRTY-
FIRST;
From prairie land and city they answered to the call,
And bravely shouldered rifle, lest their Empire's honour fall.

"From Winnipeg's Golden Gateway to Vancouver's rainy
shore,
Come Canada's sons to keep the Flag of Empire to the fore;
From Kemmel down to Ypres, go when and where you will,
The IRON SIXTH have paid the toll, and are bravely paying
still."



LT-COL E S DOUGHTY, D.S.O.
Officer Commanding 20-4-18 to 5-10-18
2-12-18 to Demobilization



MAJOR C H WESTMORE
Acting Officer Commanding
August, 1918



LT-COL W H HEWGILL
Second in Command to January, 1917
O C 21st Reserve Battalion



LT-COL N SPENCER, D.S.O.
Officer Commanding
5-10-18 to 2-12-18



MAJOR W. W. PIPER
Acting Officer Commanding
on several occasions



CHORUS:

Canada, O Canada,
The pride of all the West,
We'll fight for thee, we'll die for thee,
So that our Homeland be,
The bounteous land, the glorious land,
Forever of the free."

It is pleasant to note that Corpl. Cripps recovered from his wound, and lived to win the rank of Major. The poem was set to music by Lieut. Foote, Bandmaster of the 28th Battalion.

CHAPTER TEN.

The War — 1916

I.

The actions in which the 31st Battalion had taken part, the operations of the Canadian Corps as a whole, and the strategy which governed the British Army on the Western Front and the German armies opposed to them were all influenced by, and closely related to, events which had occurred or were occurring in other parts of Europe. In order, therefore, to make this history coherent it is advisable, at this juncture, to review, briefly, the more important of such events.

A superficial review of the war at the beginning of 1916 would have seemed to show that the Central Powers were in a strong position. Everywhere their armies had been successful or had, at least, held their own. In the east Hindenburg and Mackensen had gone from victory to victory, driving before them the ill-equipped and poorly munitioned legions of Russia. In the west her line still held in spite of the desperate Allied offensives in Artois and Champagne. The Italians were held along Austria's mountain frontier. The belated effort of the Allies to save Serbia had proved unavailing, and the Serbian nation had been irreversibly crushed.

A closer scrutiny, however, of conditions throughout Europe at this time would suggest that the situation of the Central Powers was not as happy as it appeared to be on the surface. Success, but no decision, sums up the first eighteen months of German war effort, and success alone was not sufficient. With their very much greater resources in men and in war material, time was on the side of the Allied armies.

Behind the barriers of the Western Front and an invincible navy, the might of the British Empire was being mobilized and was growing daily more formidable. Between August, 1914,

and June, 1916, the armies of Britain had been increased from six divisions to seventy. In the same period its artillery and munitionment had expanded until the situation of 1914 had been reversed. In the early days of the war the Allies in the west had no artillery to match the innumerable heavy guns possessed by the enemy; by the middle of 1916, thanks to the great effort of British industry, the preponderance of artillery had shifted to the side of the Entente Powers.

In addition to this growing strength of British arms, the effects of the tightening blockade of the British Navy was beginning to make itself felt in the Central European countries. The threat of a future shortage of war material for their armies and of food for their whole populations was already hanging over them; and, although not yet by any means at the end of their resources, each passing day brought them nearer to that end.

The year 1916 saw much heavy fighting, but did not bring Germany and her allies any nearer to forcing that decision which was daily becoming a more vital necessity to her. On balance, indeed, the end of the year saw the Central Powers in worse position than they had been at the beginning.

On the Western Front, 1916, was notable for two great battles, neither of which, in their ultimate results, redounded to the advantage of the enemy.

The first of these was the great German attack on Verdun, a strongly fortified town on the River Meuse. The preparations for this onslaught were on a gigantic scale, and rendered surprise impossible. At least 13 new divisions were brought into the Western Front; the 1916 class of conscripts were called in to complete units along the line; and a great concentration of heavy artillery, including guns from Serbia and the Russian front, was assembled before the fortress. Austrian 12-inch howitzers and several 17-inch howitzers reinforced the German artillery.

At 7.15 on the morning of February 21st, the storm of artillery fire burst on the forts covering Verdun with an unexampled fury. Under this bombardment, which was the heaviest yet experienced during the war, the first line of the French positions, and large portions of the second line, vanished. At 5.00 p.m. the German artillery lengthened its range, and the infantry

attacked, to capture the first of the positions occupied by the French.

Thus commenced a battle in which determination in attack was met by stubbornness in defence. At the cost of heavy casualties, the expenditure of unprecedented quantities of ammunition, and months of the most bitter fighting, the enemy slowly pressed back the defending forces, capturing or pounding out of existence fort after fort and position after position. Nothing seemed able to stand, for more than a limited time, against the fire of the German heavy artillery; yet the French line held.

Troops were withdrawn from other parts of the front to reinforce the defending units and to replace the tremendous losses inflicted by the enemy; and, as a result, the British line was extended. Additional artillery was brought in to endeavour to counter the immense enemy preponderance. The defence of Verdun became, to the whole French nation, something more than the holding of a fortified town the loss of which would have been by no means decisive in a military sense; it became symbolic — a test of strength between the two opposed nations. And it is certain that the loss of the town would have been far more serious to the cause of the Allies from its psychological repercussion than from its military importance.

For five desperate months the battle continued before the Allied offensive on the Somme compelled the Germans to break off the action. The turning point in the battle occurred on the last day of June, when the French successfully attacked and recaptured Thiaumont, while eleven days later the failure of a fierce German attack at Souville virtually brought the action to a close.

In the fighting at Verdun both sides suffered enormous casualties, and the action did much to hasten that process of attrition upon which the Allied Higher Command had come to rely for an ultimate decision. It is estimated that upwards of a million men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner in the action.

The second great battle in the west was the combined British and French offensive on the Somme. As this action is described in the next chapter, nothing need be said concerning it at the moment.

II.

In England, by the beginning of 1916, public sentiment had hardened into a firm resolution. The hysterical wave of loyalty which had swept the country in the early days of the war had subsided; the optimistic expectation of an early and victorious termination of hostilities had vanished, and had given place to a grim determination to attain victory at any cost; public opinion was at last prepared to abandon the haphazard and wasteful system of voluntary enlistment, so dear to the heart of the freedom-loving Briton, and to adopt a measure of compulsory service. On February 10th, 1916, the Military Service Bill came into operation, and with the passing of this act adequate reserves and reinforcements were assured for the forces in the field. This rendered possible the aggressive strategy which was adopted by the British during the following summer, and the prosecution of the Somme offensive in spite of the huge casualties which this campaign involved.

During 1916 submarine warfare was intensified, and the threat to the food supplies from overseas for the civil population of Great Britain and the forces in the field began to cause the Government real concern. Rebellion in Ireland and labour troubles at home also caused some distraction from the prosecution of the war, but did not materially weaken the effort of the Empire on its far-flung battlefields.

III.

During the winter of 1915-1916 the situation on the Eastern Front had remained unaltered. After the close of the great Germanic offensive the Austro-German forces had been unable to resume the initiative, and the Russians were content to hold the positions in which they had found themselves at the close of the German drive. By the early spring of 1916 the armies of Russia, which had lost so heavily in men, war material and munitions during the previous autumn, had been reorganized and rearmed. After being so near annihilation, they had become once more a fighting force to be regarded with respect.

It had been decided, at an Inter-Allied conference held in December, 1915, to launch, during the following summer, concurrent

offensives on the Eastern, Western and Italian fronts. In accordance with this plan the Russian armies commenced a general offensive on June 4th. Simultaneous attacks, preceded by heavy artillery bombardments, were launched upon selected sectors all along the line, and in the first few days of the campaign valuable gains were made at a number of points.

This is not the place to describe in detail the Russian operations. At some points the attacks were held up; at others advances were made of varying importance — some small and some considerable; and in the south the Austrian line was completely broken. Bukovina was over-run by the Russians, and strong forces advanced upon Lemberg and the rest of Galicia.

It would appear that the intelligence services of the Central Powers had altogether underestimated the striking power of Russia. German infantry and artillery units had been withdrawn from the Eastern Front to reinforce the assault on Verdun; Austria had drawn heavily in men and guns upon the forces opposed to Russia to strengthen her offensive against Italy. The resultant weakening of the enemy armies in the east gave the Russians an opportunity of which they fully availed themselves.

For a time the armies of the Czar advanced like an irresistible tide. The brunt of the offensive fell upon the Austrian army in Volhynia, commanded by the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. Many of the troops under his command were Czechs, who had little love for, and owed small loyalty to, the Vienna rulers. These men surrendered to the Russians in droves, still further weakening the power of resistance of the forces under the Archduke. Falkenhayn, the German General, estimated that the losses of the Austrians were more than 200,000 in the first three days of the Russian offensive. In less than a fortnight the armies under the command of General Brussilov had advanced upon a wide front for a distance of 50 miles, and had taken 70,000 prisoners, large quantities of war material of all kinds, and a considerable number of guns.

These initial successes were vigorously followed up, and for a time it looked as if the campaign in the east might prove to be a decisive factor in the war. The Russian forces continued to advance until well into August. By this time, however, the Austrians had been reinforced by a number of German divisions under

General Ludendorff, and the reserves of ammunition accumulated by the Russians during the preceding winter had been exhausted. The advance was checked; and, although it was not realized at the time, Russia had made her last valuable contribution to the cause of the Allies. Already there were grave signs of that disintegration of the Russian Empire which has been one of the most remarkable results of the war.

The campaign had, however, fulfilled its purpose. In all, the enemy Powers lost well over 300,000 of all ranks in prisoners alone, and their total casualties probably approximated a million. The war of attrition had been materially advanced by the Russian effort. Moreover, the offensive had kept in play forces which might otherwise have been used to reinforce the enemy on the Somme or supplement the armies operating against the Italians. Lastly, the moral effects of the Russian successes were considerable, especially in Austria and Rumania; in the former it bred fears of ultimate defeat and in the latter it proved to be a deciding factor in bringing that country into the war on the side of the Allies.

IV.

Meanwhile, on the Italian front, the offensive which had been timed to synchronize with the Russian offensive and the attack on the Somme, had been forestalled by a vigorous thrust by the Austrians against the Trentino front. In this mountainous region, where the altitude of the opposing positions varied from 5,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level, anything in the nature of winter operations could be carried out only with exceptional difficulty. In spite of this the Austrians, throughout the winter and early spring, had carried out a gradual concentration of men, guns and material behind their lines, and by early May preparations for the assault were complete.

The Italians were caught napping in positions which were none too good and which had not been improved during the winter lull as they might have been. On May 14th, 1916, the hostile batteries opened a heavy bombardment from Val Giudicaria to the sea, and on the following day delivered massed infantry attacks between Val Lagarina and Upper Astico. The Italians were forced out of their front-line positions and five days later the

Armentera Ridge was evacuated, while on May 20th the Austrian troops broke through the centre of the Italian line. On the following day a withdrawal of the entire front in this region was commenced.

The position had become critical, as the enemy advance now threatened the entire Venetian plain. General Cadorna, commanding the defending forces, realized the seriousness of the situation, and in the emergency rushed through plans for the immediate formation of a new army. By June 2nd this army was organized and in position. Meanwhile, however, things had continued to go badly for Italy. Position after position had been captured by the Austrians, and for the Italians the word was still: "Go back." It was not until June 17th, when the new Italian Fifth Army, consisting of upwards of a million men of all arms of the service, got into action that the advancing tide of enemy forces was checked.

By this time the Austrian offensive had spent itself. During over a month of heavy fighting the losses of the attacking forces had been heavy, and by mid-June units were being withdrawn to meet the Russian menace to Galicia. Against the heavily reinforced Italians, the depleted ranks of the armies of the Dual Monarchy were unable to make further headway, and on June 25th the retreat of the invaders commenced.

Although barren of immediate results, this Austrian offensive had its effects on the general war situation. By diverting Italian troops it interfered with the offensive which had been planned to synchronize with the drives on the Eastern and Western fronts. The hurriedly organized Fifth Army was composed of troops withdrawn from forces being assembled for the proposed Italian thrust on the Isonzo. These heavy withdrawals of men from the ranks of the armies preparing for the offensive rendered anything in the nature of large scale operations impossible for the time being.

Later, in early August, the Italians launched an offensive which gained some measure of success. The blow was delivered too late, however, as when Italy struck the force of the Russian offensive had already commenced to wane.

V.

On August 27th, 1916, Rumania entered the war on the side of the Allies by declaring war on Austria-Hungary. The political reasons which induced the Balkan Kingdom to forsake her neutrality need not be discussed here; a potent military reason was, undoubtedly, the success of the Russian armies.

Rumanian intervention brought an immediate accession of strength to the Allies of some 600,000 men. Unfortunately the artillery support was inadequate for a war such as that which was now being waged on all fronts. Only some 650 guns of all calibres were available, and of these the majority were obsolete. It was indubitably the lack of sufficient artillery which rendered the effort of Rumania abortive.

For a while all went well with the armies of our new Ally. Rapid advances were made through the Carpathian passes towards Transylvania, such opposition as was met with being swept aside. It seemed that nothing could stop the victorious advance. Then, suddenly, things began to go wrong. The Allied army, under General Sarrail, entrenched at Salonica, failed to bring the expected pressure to bear upon Bulgaria from the south; it was later rumoured that two of his officers had sold his battle plans to the enemy. This left Bulgarian troops, which should have been otherwise engaged, free to operate against Rumania. Meanwhile Falkenhayn, with strong forces supported by heavy artillery, against which the light and obsolete guns of the Rumanians were of little use, barred the road to a junction with the Russian armies in Galicia. When at last the two forces met in the involved passes of the Carpathians, the Rumanians were routed. At the same time Mackensen, advancing towards the Bucharest-Constantra Railroad, was carrying all before him.

With German forces advancing in Wallachia, with the Bulgars pressing northward from the south and the Bucharest-Constanta Railway cut by the forces under General Mackensen, it seemed probable that Rumania was destined to share the fate of Serbia. The advent of the winter rains in November, however, halted the advance of the invading armies, while assistance from Russia saved the northern portion of the country from the enemy. Rumania, although defeated, was not entirely crushed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

The Somme

I.

The bombardment which ushered in the Battle of the Somme commenced on June 26th, 1916.

For months preparations for this great Allied offensive had been in progress. Behind the lines existing roads had been repaired, widened, where necessary, and new roads had been constructed; a total of approximately 3,000 miles of railway track and sidings, with platforms and equipment for unloading cars, had been put down; ammunition and war material of all descriptions had been assembled in unprecedented quantities in the area; aerodromes had been laid out, and equipped with innumerable aeroplanes; the greatest concentration of artillery yet seen on the Western Front, ranging from the giant 16-inch naval guns on railroad mountings to the 18-pounders, had been assembled; and the whole area had been packed with troops, specially trained for the projected operations.

With the opening of the Somme offensive the enemy, for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities, found himself at a definite disadvantage in respect to guns and munitions. For the first time he was utterly incapable of mustering a weight of artillery comparable to the enormous concentration brought to bear against him. Moreover, he had lost his supremacy in the air. His own aeroplanes dared not venture over the Allied lines. In marked contrast, British squadrons cruised continually over his territory, photographing his positions, directing artillery fire, shooting down his observation balloons and even attacking his infantry with bombs and machine-gun fire. This supremacy in the air, with the uninterrupted facilities it afforded for observation, was an enormous asset to the attacking forces.

On the other hand, the Germans occupied tremendously strong positions. They had had eighteen months in which to prepare

them, and they had carried out the work with typical German thoroughness. Here was no case of a few strong points, a front line, support trenches and a reserve position. Line behind line had been constructed, bristling with machine-gun posts, redoubts, and other strongly fortified positions. The trenches were deep and well constructed, and contained the most elaborate system of dug-outs. Many of these could take a whole platoon, were often 30 feet or more below the surface, and were regarded as absolutely shell-proof. During a bombardment the bulk of the defenders could take shelter under ground, and emerge only when required to repel an attack.

The battle opened with an intensive bombardment along the whole of the 90 miles of front held by the British. This was maintained for five days. During the night of June 30th/July 1st, the bombardment in the Somme region grew in intensity until it reached an unprecedented severity. Guns of every calibre, howitzers, trench mortars and aerial torpedoes all joined in an orgy of drum-fire, every piece firing as fast as it could be loaded. Along a front of nearly thirty miles this storm of shell swept the enemy positions, obliterating trenches, crushing in dugouts and burying their occupants, smashing concrete machine-gun emplacements, and devastating the whole terrain. Never in history had there been such a crushing bombardment on such a long front.

At 7.30 a.m., on July 1st, the British infantry attacked on a front of 20 miles between Gommecourt and Montauban, while the French troops continued the line of advance for another 5 miles on both sides of the Somme. Many important tactical points were won at the first assault, including Mametz, Montauban and the Bernafay Woods, and on the whole good progress was made.

In this history we are not concerned with the details of the day-to-day events in the early fighting on the Somme. Speaking generally, progress was satisfactory. The strength of the German positions, however, made it painfully slow, and very costly. The enemy also suffered tremendous losses in killed, prisoners and wounded.

The fighting followed the same general lines all along the front. An intensive artillery bombardment was followed by the advance of the infantry in wave after wave upon the enemy.

positions. If these were taken, the attacking troops "mopped up" the captured trenches and consolidated them against counter-attack, frequently making prisoners of large numbers of demoralized Germans who had been hiding in the dugouts. When, as frequently happened, the advance was held up by undemolished machine-gun posts, further artillery fire was brought to bear until the resistance was crushed.

It must not be supposed, however, that all the shelling was on the one side. The Germans, although facing a great preponderance of artillery, were well equipped with guns of all calibres, and the Allied troops were frequently heavily shelled in positions which offered poor protection.

As the Allied line advanced, the artillery in the rear was brought forward to new positions. Over the broken and torn ground this operation, especially in the case of the heavier guns, was a tedious and laborious process. Ammunition in immense quantities had also to be brought up, and as the advance penetrated deeper and deeper into enemy territory the difficulties of supply became greater.

Thus, day after day, the fighting continued. Line after line, position after position, village after village were captured or pounded out of existence. Division after division was thrown into the attack, decimated and withdrawn for reorganization and reinforcement before being sent forward again into the inferno of battle. So fierce was the fighting, and so heavy the casualties on both sides, that the territory won for itself the appellation, "The blood-bath of the Somme."

In the first phase of the British offensive the attacking forces penetrated to an average depth of about a mile upon a six-mile front, stretching in a rough semi-circle from Montauban to La Boisselle. The second phase opened on July 14th along a front of some three miles from Longueval to Bazentin-le-Petit Wood. A bloody and costly fight ensued for the villages and dominating ridges until at last Trones Wood, the two Bazentins, Ovillers, Longueval and Pozieres fell into British hands. After heavy fighting the enemy lost Delville Wood, High Wood, Guillemont and Ginchy before the second stage of the battle closed. The opening of the third phase was set for September 15th, when the German

defences were to be assaulted at Flers Martinpuich, Courcelette, Morval, Les Boeufs and Combles, and in this phase the Canadian Corps was destined to play its part.

II.

When the 31st Battalion entrained at St. Omer on the morning of September 5th, the battle of the Somme had been raging for over ten weeks. Substantial progress had been made by the Allied armies in this period, and a great wedge had been driven into the enemy's lines; but the advance was still meeting with the most stubborn resistance, and there was still no sign of the hoped-for breakthrough.

The train carrying the Battalion was routed by way of Boulogne, through which the unit had passed a year before on its way to the front. Etaples was passed, and then Abbeville. At 2.00 p.m., after a slow and uncomfortable journey, Candas was reached, and at this point the men detrained. From Candas a seven-mile march brought the men to Val de Maison, where they were billeted for the night. Early on the following morning the march was continued through Vadencourt and Herissart to Contay, where the night was spent in bivouac in a field. The camp at Brickfields was finally reached at 1.30 p.m. on September 7th, and the men again bivouacked.

The 31st Battalion was now just behind the famous battlefield of the Somme. Eastward the continual thunder of the guns could be heard, and the whole area was packed with khaki-clad troops. The roads were choked with battalions on the march, transport, ambulance, staff cars and messengers on motor cycles, while from the sky came the almost continual drone of passing aeroplanes. Brickfields Camp was on the outskirts of Albert, and had been handed over by the Australians to the Canadians on September 4th. The area to the immediate east of the camp, including Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, had witnessed some terrible fighting, in which the men from the Commonwealth had won distinction and had paid for it a heavy price in blood.

On the day following the Battalion's arrival in camp 100 men from each company were detailed for special training in signalling in co-operation with aeroplanes. This new method of commun-

cation from the air was an important development, and was to prove highly effective on many occasions. The remainder of the men went into sectional training and cleaned camp.

On September 9th identification patches were issued to the troops. These indicated the division, brigade and battalion to which each man belonged, while distinctive patches were issued, in addition, to battalion runners, scouts, bombers and carrying parties for the engineers. During the day the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade arrived in camp and bivouacked beside the 6th Brigade.

On the afternoon of the following day working parties of the 31st Battalion were sent forward into the line to consolidate and to prepare assembly positions. That night the unit moved forward into support and relieved the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the 1st Canadian Division. The support position was just to the east of Pozieres, and had been taken from the Germans by the Australians after particularly desperate fighting. The ground was still encumbered with the unburied dead of Germany and Australia, lying about haphazard on the shell-torn earth.

The 31st Battalion was in support of the 29th, which held the front line. To the left of the 6th Brigade front the 3rd Brigade was stationed, while on the right the 4th Brigade held the line.

During the night of September 11th an officer and nine men per company were sent forward to dig an assembly trench fifty yards to the rear of the front line, in preparation for an attack by the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Canadian Corps timed to take place on the 15th. Heavy enemy shelling which took place during this operation resulted in two men of the Battalion being killed and fifteen wounded, while Capt. K. Taylor, of the 29th Battalion, who was assisting the working parties in their mission, was also killed.

Throughout the following day the enemy maintained a continual shrapnel fire against the area occupied by the Canadian Corps, causing many casualties in the units assembling for the attack. During the night the 3rd Canadian Division arrived in the area and bivouacked on the left of the 6th Brigade, the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles going immediately into the line to relieve the 5th Battalion.

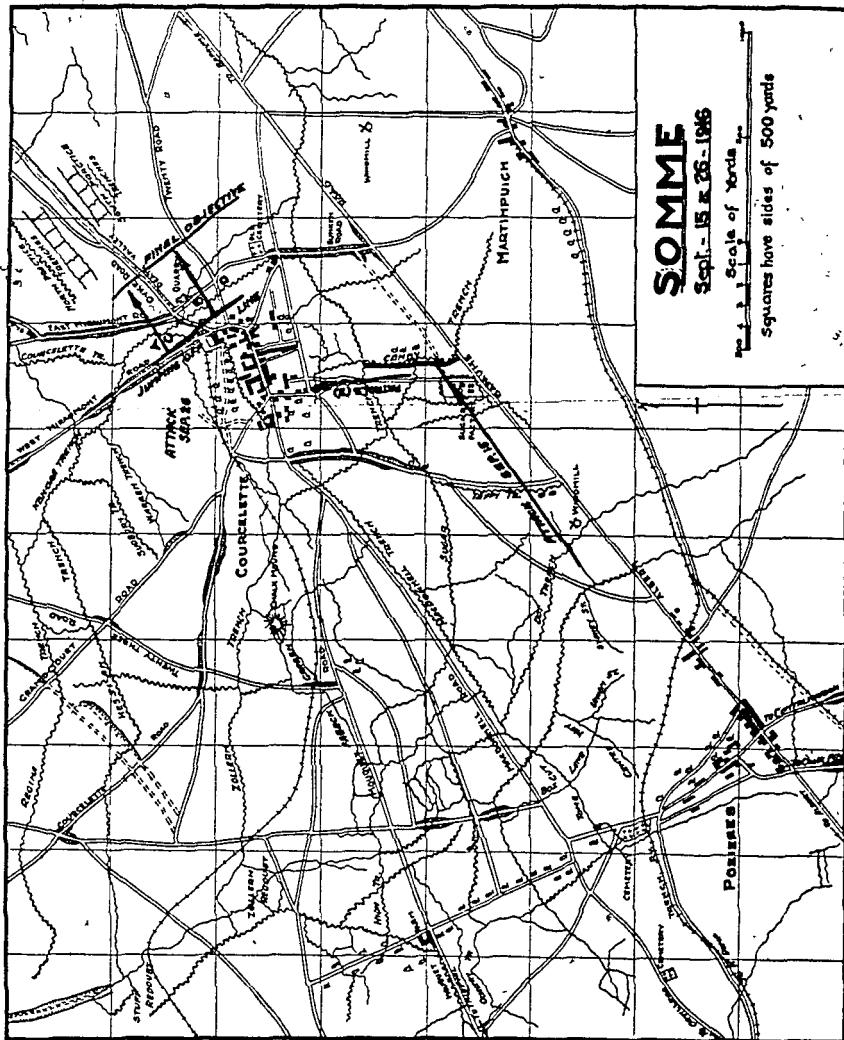
All along the sectors concerned preparations were being pushed rapidly forward in anticipation of the forthcoming advance.

Artillery of all calibres was assembled, the batteries in many cases being brought up close to the support lines and the guns standing practically wheel to wheel. Assembly positions were prepared and objectives marked down. Everything, in short, that foresight and experience could suggest to render the attacks successful was attended to.

At this time, also, the Canadian troops had their first experience of the British tanks, which were to co-operate with the infantry in the projected offensive. A number of these new weapons of warfare were allocated to the Canadian Corps, half-a-dozen being attached to the 6th Brigade. Slow, clumsy and elephantine in their movements, with a top speed of about six miles per hour, these tanks were destined to give a good account of themselves, although they were of very little assistance in the operations of the Canadian Corps. Armed with a six-pounder quick-firing gun and machine guns, and themselves impervious to both rifle and machine-gun fire, the tanks could go where infantry would be annihilated. They could pass over and crush down uncut wire, waddle clumsily through craters and over trenches and, when necessary, push down and pass over walls. In making a path for the infantry to follow they were invaluable, and they were also of great use in silencing machine-gun posts which had escaped the artillery barrage. In fact, it is, perhaps, no overstatement to say that, had they been available in much greater numbers, the Allies would have made a clean break-through on the Somme before the enemy could adopt effective counter-measures, and the war brought thereby to an early conclusion.

III.

When the Canadian Corps took up its position in the Somme area most of the German second line had been taken, including the greater part of the dominating ridge running through Pozieres, Longueval and Ginchy. To the north-west, however, on the left flank of the advance, the Thiepval plateau was still in German hands. This plateau commanded the Ancre, and its capture was of vital importance to the Allied offensive. For this reason the Australians had worked along the Bapaume Road to the south with the object of pinching off the salient formed by the enemy lines in





1. After the fight.
2. Someone's home.
3. The end of the war for them.
4. Tanks massing for the attack



this area. When relieved by the Canadians they were already beyond Pozieres, and had captured the Windmill, one of the two dominating heights of the ridge. The other height, Mouquet Farm, located about midway between Pozieres and Thiepval, was holding out stubbornly and resisting the continual pressure brought to bear upon the position.

A new German line had been constructed further along the Bapaume Road on the reverse side of the ridge. This line ran through the villages of Courcelette, Martinpuich and Flers. Courcelette lay at the north-western end of the line, and was covered by a strong redoubt called the Sugar Factory, situated about half a mile south of the village. This redoubt was the hub of a strong trench system which had to be taken before Courcelette or Martinpuich could be reached from the west.

Disputing advance to the north was a trench system which connected Courcelette with the Thiepval positions — the Fabeck Graben running towards Mouquet Farm and, to its rear, the Zollern Graben with the Zollern Redoubt at its centre. Behind lay the Hessian Trench and further back still the Regina Trench.

The section of the line taken over by the Canadian Corps ran across the Bapaume Road in front of Pozieres Windmill, from a point about 500 yards to the right of the road in a north-easterly direction towards Mouquet Farm. In this position the Corps was on the extreme right of the British Reserve Army, which subsequently became the Fifth Army, and its right flank joined up with the left of the Fourth Army. The Bapaume Road was crossed at right angles by the Canadian line, which faced roughly north-east.

The German defence system in front of the Canadian positions was a formidable one, and was regarded by the enemy as being impregnable. From the ruined Sugar Factory a trench, known as Candy Trench, ran southward to Martinpuich. Northwards from the factory a second trench was constructed for a distance of some 200 yards, and this was crossed almost at right angles by another trench, called Sugar Trench, running roughly east and west and crossing Macdonell Trench just in front of the Canadian line. The Macdonell Road itself, connecting Ovillers La Boisselle with Courcelette ran, in this neighbourhood, through a cutting which was strongly entrenched. Running northward from the Bapaume

Road to the outskirts of Courcelette was a sunken lane which was also strongly fortified. About a quarter of a mile behind these strong positions was a second line of defence running from Courcelette to Martinpuich, while the outskirts of these villages, with their dugouts, cellars and machine-gun posts, afforded further obstacles to an advance.

To the 2nd Canadian Division was assigned the mission of storming the lines of Candy and Sugar trenches. On the right of the Division, where the ground was comparatively clear, it was planned to go straight through and attack Candy Trench and the Sugar Factory. On the left the objective was to be Sugar Trench, where the advance was to be stayed and the positions consolidated.

The attack was to be launched upon a two-brigade frontage, with the 4th Brigade to the south of the Bapaume Road on the right and the 6th Brigade on the left. The Sugar Factory itself was expected to present the most obstinate point of resistance, and of the six tanks allocated to the Brigade three were to go straight along the Bapaume Road, while the remainder converged on the factory from the direction of Sugar Trench. The 5th Brigade, in reserve, was to be held in readiness to exploit any success which might result from the advances of its sister brigades of the 2nd Division.

The defence of the left flank of the 2nd Division was entrusted to the 3rd Division. The role of the latter was to operate against Macdonell Road, and, if possible, to bring enfilade fire to bear upon Sugar Trench, while the 4th C. M. R.'s were to carry out a raid towards Mouquet Farm as a diversion.

IV.

The attack was timed for September 15th, a notable date in the history of the Canadian Corps; for on that day the troops of the Dominion, taking part for the first time in a general offensive, not only carried all the planned objectives of the attack, but proceeded to capture further positions which had formed no part of the original plan.

On the night of September 11th the 2nd and 3rd Divisions relieved the 1st Division in the line, the latter proceeding to a rest camp west of Albert. Two days later the artillery preparation

commenced, heavy shell fire, to which no serious reply was made, being maintained throughout the day upon the enemy positions. That night 380 men of the 31st Battalion were detailed to dig a trench to the rear of the front line. The work was carried out under enemy artillery fire which killed three of the men and wounded fifteen. The artillery in support of the Canadian Corps maintained a steady bombardment throughout the hours of darkness.

On September 14th Battalion carrying parties took forward supplies of water, ammunition, grenades, flares, sandbags and tools to advance dumps. This was a dangerous job, as the German guns were bringing down a heavy bombardment during which one of the dumps was set on fire and destroyed. At 3.00 p.m. Lieut. F. M. Holden, the Machine-gun Officer, moved forward and placed the four Colt guns in position just to the rear of the front line. Four hours later the supporting artillery brought down a terrific bombardment on the enemy lines which never slackened until after midnight, when its violence was somewhat diminished.

At 9.30 p.m. the 31st Battalion moved up into the trenches which it had helped to dig on the previous night just behind the front line. Battalion Headquarters also moved forward and shared a dugout with the staff of the 28th Battalion near Point 77, Union Trench.

On the 6th Brigade frontage the 27th and 28th Battalions were on the right and left respectively of the front line, with the 31st Battalion in close support. The companies of the front-line battalions were ordered to push forward with all speed to their objectives, keeping well up to the barrage. The 31st Battalion was to follow and carry out the necessary "mopping up." This work would inevitably mean that the various platoons would become widely scattered during the action, and difficult to control from Regimental Headquarters — a situation which, while regrettable, was inevitable under the circumstances.

The morning of Friday, September 15th, dawned fine and clear, and the sun had already risen when the attack was launched. Zero hour was 6.20 a.m., and promptly to the minute the barrage to cover the infantry advance was brought down. The first wave of the attack went over the parapet and moved forward with great

determination under the shell fire of the German guns. Closely following it came the intermediate waves of the 31st Battalion, which advanced in good order through the flying splinters of enemy shells.

Three platoons of A Company, carrying Mills bombs, rifle grenades and sandbags in addition to rifle and ammunition, supported the right of the 27th Battalion. They followed within a dozen yards or so of the first wave of the attack. This party reached the German front-line positions without undue difficulty, but at the cost of serious casualties. Major Splane was killed early in the advance while leading the detachment, and it was not long before all the remaining officers were either killed or wounded by shell fire or enemy snipers, while a number of the rank and file were also lying dead or injured upon the captured ground. The work of consolidation, therefore, devolved upon the shoulders of Company Sergt.-Major G. Lawson, who carried out the work in a manner deserving of the highest praise. Throughout the day the enemy artillery shelled the positions occupied by the survivors of these three platoons without cessation, but in spite of this the work went forward and by evening the line was in condition to withstand attack.

Meanwhile the fourth platoon of A Company, acting as a carrying party and laden with sandbags, bombs, picks and shovels, followed along with the reserve company of the 27th Battalion.

The platoons of A Company had carried out, by the end of the day, the parts assigned to them in the general scheme of the attack, but they had paid a big price for their success. In addition to Major Splane, many other outstanding officers, N. C. O.'s and men were killed in this advance. These included Lieut. Eric Sharples, Lance Cpl. Jack Salter who, at the time, was leading No. 2 Platoon, and Pte. David Grant, one of the most popular and self-effacing soldiers in the Battalion.

On the left of A Company three platoons of B Company followed the left of the 27th Battalion in the attack. Their duty was to "mop" up and consolidate the enemy positions along the sunken road running towards Courcellete. As in the case of A Company, the remaining platoon was acting as a carrying party, and followed in the rear of the attacking waves.

The "mopping-up" party of B Company arrived at their objective without serious opposition. On reaching the road an enemy communication trench was discovered running along the west bank but no Germans were visible. The positions had been so badly smashed by the artillery bombardment that they had not been deemed worth defending.

Immediately upon arrival the men commenced the work of clearing away the debris and consolidating the position. When this had been completed the existing trench was extended about 50 yards in the direction of Courcellette, while another trench was dug across the sunken road, forming a block and enabling the detachment to command the road in the event of a counter-attack. The block was completed by 10.00 a.m. in spite of casualties inflicted by active enemy sniping and machine-gun fire. A little later the enemy shelling, which had been intermittent earlier in the day, became much more severe, and caused a number of casualties. Lieut. Boucher being among the killed, and the command of the party falling upon the shoulders of Lieut. W. D. Friend.

As the day wore on the shelling of the positions occupied by the men of B Company increased in severity. The enemy had the range to a yard, and plastered the sunken road and its trench system with high explosive shell from every available gun. Several times the men had to vacate the trenches and take shelter in shell holes in order to escape the fury of the bombardment. Casualties increased at an alarming rate, and by early afternoon the situation was rapidly becoming critical. At about 2.00 p.m. Lieut. Friend sent back word to the O.C. of D Company, which was in reserve, explaining the position and asking for reinforcements, with the result that ten men were sent up to replenish the depleted ranks of B Company. With this addition to their strength, the men maintained their hold on the road, and were able to consolidate the position firmly in spite of the enemy artillery. All day, and throughout the night, the shell fire and sniping continued practically without a pause, but in spite of this the work on the trenches was continued. At 5.30 on the following morning the remnants of the party were withdrawn, and joined D Company in the original jumping-off trenches.

In the meantime three platoons of C Company were co-operating with the 28th Battalion on the left flank of the attack.

The remaining platoon was attached to D Company in Tramway Trench. Of these three platoons two, forming the first intermediate wave, were assigned the duty of "mopping up" in the German front-line positions, while the third acted as a carrying party for the 28th Battalion.

As in the case of A Company, the Officer Commanding the party, Lieut. E. F. Pinkham, was killed while leading his men early in the advance, and at almost the same time Lieut. E. T. Toole fell mortally wounded. Before long all the other officers had become casualties. The responsibilities of command thus fell upon Company Sergt.-Major J. S. Park, who discharged his duties with courage and resource. At one stage in the advance the attack was held up by the fire of an undemolished machine-gun post. Pte. John Inkster, quickly realizing the situation, collected a number of bombs and with great gallantry attacked this obstruction single handed, and put the post out of action, but was sniped in the moment of his triumph. The German front-line trenches were reached by 8.15 a.m. Here the Company Sergt.-Major found that only the survivors of one platoon, No. 11, were at his disposal. The other two platoons had become mixed up with the 28th Battalion, and had gone on to the further objective.

Setting his men to consolidate a position about fifty yards in advance of the German front line, this N.C.O. proceeded forward in search of his two errant platoons, and eventually managed to locate them under the command of Capt. Bredin, of the 28th Battalion, who had used them effectively. This officer permitted the men to go back to assist in the work of consolidation.

Up to this time the enemy shell fire against this part of the line had not been excessive, but shortly after the German artillery brought down a heavy bombardment on the positions occupied by the platoons of C Company. The men continued work upon the digging of the trenches until the shelling became too severe for further activity, when they withdrew to an enemy communication trench running parallel to the sunken road. Here they remained until about 5 o'clock, at which hour Lieut. H. Norris, of D Company, sent orders for them to withdraw to the original jumping-off positions. By this time the P.P.C.L.I. and the 42nd Battalion were passing through to continue operations against Macdonell Road

and the Fabeck Graben respectively, and the men of C Company found some difficulty in clearing from the line on account of the heavy barrage the enemy was putting down over the ground to be covered. Luckily, they reached the trenches without further casualties, and remained there until nightfall, when they were relieved of duty.

At five minutes before zero hour on September 15th D Company, with one platoon of C Company, moved forward from Tramway Trench in support of the 27th Battalion. To this detachment was assigned the duty of carrying forward water supplies and sandbags, and of digging a support trench. D Company also furnished two out of the three battle patrols supplied by the 31st Battalion, concerning the operations of which further reference will be made later.

There was considerable congestion in the rearward area during the early stages of the advance, and it was 6.45 a.m. before the entrenching party, under Lieut. H. Norris, deployed in "No Man's Land." This party consisted of three officers and 42 other ranks. Advancing over the shell-swept ground, the detachment came upon a number of the 27th Battalion engaged in a fight with a body of the enemy just short of the German trenches. Lieut. Norris promptly flung his men into the melee and, after a short but stubborn struggle, the enemy resistance was overcome. The advance was then continued until the final objective was reached, a number of stragglers from other units joining the party en route. The work of consolidating the captured trench was rapidly completed, and Lieut. Norris then withdrew his men to dig the support line. By this time the enemy shelling had become incessant and heavy, rendering the work of entrenchment both difficult and dangerous.

While this bombardment was proceeding a runner brought word to Lieut. Norris that Major Splane and Lieuts. Pinkham and Toole had been killed, and a number of the other officers wounded. Upon receipt of this information Lieut. Norris proceeded to reorganize such parties of the Battalion as he was able to get in touch with. About 2.00 p.m. another messenger came through with information to the effect that the battle patrols had penetrated to the outskirts of Courcellette, but that reinforcements were urgently needed. Twenty men, with a Lewis gun, were sent forward, and shortly afterwards a further ten men were dispatched

to reinforce the hardly-pressed remnant of B Company in the sunken road.

Throughout the day the remaining men of the party under Lieut. Norris continued the work of digging in. When darkness fell orders were received to fall back to the original jumping-off positions, which were reached during the night. The men of Lieut. Norris' detachment had done a good day's work, and had risen to the occasion under conditions which had often been extremely difficult. Lieut. Norris was most ably supported by Lieut. Hector Kennedy, whose courage and example were of great assistance to the men.

By 5.15 a.m., on the following day, all the survivors of the Battalion, except the battle patrols and a party under Lieut. H. P. Morgan, which had been left behind to bring in the wounded, had been withdrawn, and were assembled in their positions of the previous morning.

V.

While the main body of the Battalion had been engaged in the operations already described, three battle patrols had been thrown forward with the 27th and 28th Battalions. The right and centre patrols had been furnished by D Company, and were under the command of Lieut. G. H. Scott and Lieut. L. B. Yule respectively; the left patrol, under Lieut. J. Millington, had been furnished by C Company. Each patrol consisted of the officer in command and 30 men, with one Lewis machine gun.

These battle patrols left Tramway Trench at 6.00 a.m. The centre and left patrols came under heavy shell fire as they advanced, and became the target of a number of enemy snipers. Both parties suffered heavily, Lieut. Millington being wounded soon after leaving the trench. He refused to withdraw from the action, and, having assembled his men, who had become scattered by the barrage, he resumed the advance. Almost immediately he was again wounded, and compelled to fall out, the command of the patrol passing to Sergt. C. W. Barclay. This N. C. O. was also wounded a few minutes later, but decided to carry on, and was killed shortly afterwards. The Lewis gun was destroyed by shell fire, and the situation became desperate. Lieut. Yule, however, joined the left

patrol to his own, and the combined bodies moved forward to a point on the south-western outskirts of the village of Courcelette.

In the meantime the right patrol had been making good progress. Advancing by way of Copse Avenue and Sydney Trench, it had halted in the latter for a few minutes to reorganize before proceeding to cross "No Man's Land." It had then emerged into the open, following closely in the wake of the leading waves of the attack. Once clear of the protection of the trenches the ranks of the main advance were decimated by shell and machine-gun fire, while the patrol in their immediate rear also suffered casualties and had its Lewis machine gun put out of action. The crew, however, refused to be daunted by this untoward event, and managed to secure another gun. The advance then continued, and the sunken road previously referred to was reached just after 7 o'clock. From this point the patrol moved on towards the village, cleaning up the dugouts as it went. At 7.23 a.m. the barrage, which had been resting for 18 minutes on Courcelette, lifted and played to the east of the village and along Gunpit Road. The patrol then took position with its right flank resting on a line running from north of the Sugar Factory to the village church and its left about fifty yards short of the village itself. The Sugar Factory had been already captured and cleaned up by the Canadian attack, with the assistance of the only two tanks which had been successful in getting through.

In this position the patrol consolidated. Scouts pushed forward to the village, entering and bombing the dugouts along the road, and capturing five prisoners, one an artillery officer who had been directing the fire of his battery.

As soon as the consolidation of the position had been completed the patrol continued its work of cleaning up the area. During this operation a large body of the enemy, about 150 strong, was encountered, and a sharp fight ensued. The Canadian detachment, although greatly outnumbered, refused to give ground, and for some time the struggle swayed backwards and forwards without advantage to either side. Eventually the Lewis gun was brought into action, and before its rain of bullets the German resistance wilted, the survivors of the party being made prisoners.

On the left of the patrol some three hundred yards of frontage was not held, and a request for reinforcements was sent back.

These, however, did not arrive in time to be of service, the post being too far forward to receive much help.

The first Canadian troops to reach Courcelette were men of this patrol, and their reserves were far to the rear. Two patrols, each of twenty men, with a machine-gun, were actually sent forward from D Company to reinforce the battle patrols at about 1.00 p.m., but neither of these penetrated as far as the village. Lieut. Scott, however, managed to supplement his depleted ranks by collecting men who strayed from their battalions, and during the whole of the afternoon men of all units kept dribbling forward to reinforce the patrol.

Throughout the noon bombardment put down by the enemy to break up attacking formations the patrol held on to its positions and kept up a continual duel with snipers stationed amid the ruins of the village. A determined attack upon the trench was also repulsed by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire with serious casualties to the enemy. In spite of mounting casualties, the gallant little party with its heterogeneous reinforcements, retained its ground until the events of the evening brought the first phase of the day's fighting to a close.

VI.

The Canadian attack of the morning of September 15th had been delivered with extreme dash, determination and gallantry. All the objectives had been swiftly, if not easily, attained; and although the casualties had been heavy, the advantage gained had been material.

The complete nature of the success achieved was responsible for the decision of Corps Headquarters to strike again while the enemy was still disorganized by the reverses of the morning. Orders were issued to the effect that the attack should be proceeded with, the 3rd Division being instructed to send the 7th Brigade against the Fabeck Graben defences, while the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Division was ordered to undertake the capture of Courcelette. Both advances were timed for 5.30 p.m.

The 5th Brigade went up over the newly-won ground, turned northward at Candy Trench, and swept across the open towards Courcelette. On the right of the attack were the French-Canadian

troops of the 22nd Battalion and on the left the 25th Battalion from Nova Scotia, while the 26th Battalion from New Brunswick followed in close support to do any "mopping-up" which might be required. As the attacking waves went through the advance positions held by the men of the 31st Battalion, these indefatigable patrols, in spite of the gruelling fighting of the day, joined the van of the advance and went forward with the men of the 5th Brigade.

In a very short time the village was in Canadian hands. Here and there bodies of the enemy faced the attacking troops with the bayonet, and went down fighting gallantly; here and there snipers clung to their posts to the last, inflicting casualties upon the advancing troops until they were killed or captured; but all such resistance was rapidly overcome, and before dusk a new line had been established beyond the village.

When Lieut. Scott was assured that the attack had been successfully driven home he proceeded to collect the survivors of the battle patrols of the 31st Battalion and ordered them to withdraw to the original jumping-off trenches. This withdrawal was nearly as exciting and dangerous as the advance had been. The enemy was putting down an extremely heavy bombardment over all the rearward area with a view to breaking up any concentration which might gather to push the attack still further. Through this barrage the men of the patrols had to pass in order to join the main body of the Battalion, and it made a dangerous ending to a day which had been replete with danger and with death.

The night of September 15th was spent by the 31st Battalion in the original jumping-off trenches, the unit being in support of the 28th Battalion. Throughout the night the enemy artillery continued to shell the positions, and the men got little rest. By 9 o'clock on the following morning 318 men of the Battalion had gathered in the trenches out of an original strength of 722 of all ranks. During the day a few stragglers rejoined the unit, but the casualties, when all were accounted for, exceeded 50 per cent. as a result of the action.

The success achieved by the men of the Dominion in their first real offensive action had been brilliant, and had given added lustre to the reputation of the Canadian Corps. All that had been required of them, and more than all, had been accomplished; and in

this accomplishment the 31st Battalion had played a part in which it might justly have pride.

The jubilation of success, however, was tempered by its cost. Half the Battalion — killed, wounded or missing — failed to answer the roll call; and among the slain were many officers, N.C.O.'s and men who had been with the unit since its organization and who had won the affection and respect of all their comrades: Major Splane, loved by his men for his constant care of their well-being and comfort; Lieut. Pinkham, one of the original company officers, and Lieut. Boucher, promoted from the ranks soon after organization; Lieuts. Conrad and Keyes, who had been with the Battalion from the first and had only recently won promotion in the field; Lieuts. Toole, Sharples and Swain, all three popular with their men and their brother officers; and many another gallant N.C.O. and man had been called upon that day to make the final sacrifice.

During the action many individual acts of exceptional bravery and devotion to duty had been performed by the N.C.O.'s and men of the Battalion which, owing to the extremely heavy officer casualties, received no official recognition. In many instances command of detachments devolved upon the non-commissioned ranks, and the deeds of these men and of those under their control passed unrecorded, if not untold.

VII.

While the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division had been engaged in the capture of Courcelette, the 7th Brigade of the 3rd Division had been carrying out equally successful operations against the Fabeck Graben trench system. This attack was in the nature of a last-minute decision on the part of Headquarters, and was hurriedly planned and hastily executed. Written operation orders did not reach the units concerned before the commencement of the advance, but were passed verbally or by telephone to the officers commanding. There was little time in which to issue detailed instructions to company officers, and no time to reconnoitre the ground over which the attack was to take place. The inevitable result was a certain amount of confusion, but in spite of this the assault was pushed home to a triumphant conclusion and the decision of the Staff was amply justified by the results obtained.

From the Chalk Pits the units of the 7th Brigade advanced in a north-easterly direction towards Sugar Trench, under a withering artillery fire which caused heavy casualties. On the right of the attack the P.P.C.L.I. pushed along the sunken lane running from the Albert-Bapaume Road towards Courcelette, and over the open ground to the left thereof. Sugar Trench, the planned assembly and jumping-off position, was missed entirely, and the "Patricias" found themselves in "No Man's Land" before they were aware of it, and close to the Macdonell Trench. Here they were compelled to deploy across the enemy's front at nearly point blank range, a proceeding which might have been fatal had not the enemy been completely demoralized. Actually the attacking troops completed the manoeuvre without opposition, and, continuing the advance, captured the first objectives without meeting serious resistance.

The 42nd Battalion, attacking on the left of the P.P.C.L.I., was equally successful. Advancing across the open from Sugar Trench in a north-westerly direction and under heavy shell fire, it captured the enemy positions assigned to it without very serious losses. The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles formed the extreme left flank of the advance and, attacking on a narrow front, was successful in gaining its objectives. By nightfall most of the Fabeck Graben positions were in Canadian hands.

During the day the Canadian forces had penetrated the enemy positions to a maximum depth of well over 2,000 yards, and an average depth of some 1,500 yards, along a front of about 4,000 yards. Candy and Gunpit Trenches had been taken to the west, and the village of Martinpuich had been entered. The new line ran to the east of Courcelette, on the north of which it formed a sharp salient, and then ran roughly east and west along the Fabeck Graben towards Mouquet Farm.

On the afternoon of September 16th the P.P.C.L.I., in co-operation with details of the 42nd Battalion, captured the sector of the Fabeck Graben which still remained in enemy hands, and towards evening a further attack was launched on the Zollern Graben by the 42nd Battalion and the Royal Canadian Regiment, in co-operation with details of the 49th Battalion and the P.P.C.L.I. By nightfall the whole of this line was also in Canadian hands.

After this little further progress was made. The line was consolidated, and the supporting artillery was moved up into new positions. On September 22nd the 3rd Division was relieved by the 1st Division after ten days of severe fighting.

The total casualties of the Canadian Corps from September 13th to 20th had amounted to about 6,000. Under the circumstances, this could not be regarded as an excessive number in view of the results which had been achieved. The Corps had not only captured a number of strong enemy positions, but had also successfully acted as pivot to the British attack on its right and had greatly improved its situation for further advances.

VIII.

While the 31st Battalion was engaged before Courcelette, some 60 reinforcements had arrived in the transport lines from England. These were taken on the strength and posted to their companies on September 17th. In addition to this draft a number of men of B Company, who had been posted to the 2nd Division Entrenching Battalion, were recalled, and rejoined the unit, bringing the total strength up to about 450 of all ranks. A congratulatory letter had been received from the G. O. C. 2nd Canadian Division, which read as follows:

"I want to congratulate you on the splendid work carried out by your Battalion to-day. The Army Commander, General Gough, is particularly well pleased at the credit brought to his army by to-day's work."

(Signed) R. E. W. Turner,
Major-General."

To this message Col. Bell added his personal appreciation of the work done when promulgating the G. O. C.'s letter in orders.

The 31st Battalion was relieved on September 16th, and reached bivouac at the Brickfields in the early evening. On the following morning the men marched out en route for Fieffes, near Bonneville, which was reached by easy stages on September 19th. The weather during the march was atrocious; and the men were wet to the skin when they arrived at their destination.

At Fieffes comfortable billets were found, but the period of rest was short. On the day after its arrival a complete inspection of the unit and its equipment was made, and as each company passed this inspection it went immediately into training. Two days later the return march to the Somme was commenced.

While at Fieffes a telegram was received from Major-General Sir Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence, thanking the Battalion for its work on the Somme. Notification also appeared in Divisional Routine Orders that Pte. A. H. Jackson, who, it will be recalled, was the first man in the 31st Battalion to receive a war decoration, had been awarded the Russian Cross of St. George, 4th Class, by the Commander-in-Chief.

The march back to the battle area was uneventful. At Contay Lieut. J. F. Arbuckle, who had arrived from England, rejoined the unit. On September 24th the Battalion reached Tara Hill, to the north of Albert, where it went into bivouac as brigade reserve.

IX.

Grim fighting, crowned with spectacular success, had been the portion of the Canadian Corps in mid-September. Towards the end of the month a struggle still more grim and desperate, and lacking any swift success, was commenced. On September 26th the first of a long series of attacks against the strong positions of Regina Trench was inaugurated.

On the night of September 25th, the 2nd Canadian Division went back into the line. By this time the front held by the Corps had been somewhat shortened. On the right the III. (British) Corps had taken over the trenches as far as the Albert-Bapaume Road, and on the left the Mouquet Farm front was held by the II. Corps.

The line allotted to the 2nd Division ran from the junction of the Bapaume Road and Sugar Trench northward round the eastern and northern outskirts of Courcelette to a point a little to the left of the West Mirumont Road. From this point the 1st Division carried on the line, the trenches running around the north of the Chalk Mound and thence along the Fabeck Graben to a point some 800 yards east of Mouquet Farm.

The offensive planned for September 26th was to be of a general character. The Fourth Army was to continue its drive from Martinpuich southwards, while the Reserve Army was advancing to bring its front into line and commence its attack on the Thiepval positions. The 11th British Division, operating on the left of the Canadians, was to assault Zollern and Stuff Redoubts, and the Zollern and Hessian trench systems running from them towards the east. The Canadian Corps was to advance with this division and push forward to the north of Courcelette.

The advance assigned to the 2nd Canadian Division was only a short one. Its objective was the German trench from Twenty Road, running eastward from Courcelette, to the West Miraumont Road. This included a short section of the Kenora Trench located between the two Miraumont roads, a strong position which was to prove a serious obstacle to the attack along this sector. Advance posts were also to be established beyond the objectives along Twenty Road, in the Courcelette Trench and in the Practice Trenches located to the north-east of the village.

For this operation the 6th Brigade was chosen, the 29th Battalion being assigned to the right flank of the attack opposite the Practice Trenches, with the 31st Battalion on its left. The latter had on its front the two sunken Miraumont Roads and the Courcelette Trench. While the 2nd Division was attacking these objectives the 1st Division was ordered to attack the line running along Kenora Trench and Hessian Trench to the junction with the 11th British Division.

In the early morning of September 25th the 31st Battalion moved from Tara Hill to the Chalk Pits in Sausage Valley. At noon the German guns opened a concentrated bombardment of the whole area, and the 6th Brigade was trapped. It was evident that enemy artillery observers had detected the long columns of troops moving forward and, realizing that another attack was in preparation, had brought every gun that would bear into action. So fierce was the shelling that formations were broken up, and the men were compelled to take cover in shell holes and such other protection as was available. During the bombardment the Brigade suffered a number of casualties. The 31st Battalion alone lost three killed and 28 wounded, three of the latter being officers (Lieuts. Norris,

Morgan and Living). The loss of these officers, all of whom were evacuated to hospital, was serious, as the cadre had already been greatly depleted by the action of September 15th, and the services of those holding commissioned rank could ill be spared.

In the meantime, Col. Bell and Major Hewgill had proceeded forward to Courcelette to look over the ground across which the attack was to be made. Their reconnaissance involved considerable personal danger, as the enemy was peppering the village and its environs with shrapnel. Nothing untoward happened, however. The enemy positions appeared to be strong and permanent, well protected by wire and almost certainly covered by plenty of concealed machine-gun posts.

At 7 o'clock that evening the 31st Battalion again moved forward to take up its position in the trenches surrounding Courcelette, and, by 9.15 p.m., Battalion Headquarters had been located in a forward dugout from which the attack could be conveniently directed. During the advance Capt. L'Amy was wounded, but refused to retire on account of the shortage of officers. Later in the evening the ranks of the unit received a welcome addition when Lieut. R. B. Carter and 20 men reported from England and were taken onto the strength.

On account of limited space and poor facilities for troop movements, the relief of the 27th and 28th Battalions by the 29th and 31st was a long and tedious process. To add to the difficulties the front and support trenches, as far east as the West Miraumont Road, were congested by the men of the 13th Battalion of the 1st Division, who had massed in 200 yards of trench on the frontage assigned to the 6th Brigade. Evidently the divisional boundaries had not been clearly laid down, as the Adjutant of the 13th Battalion persisted in stating that his orders were to hold these trenches and that he could not give way to the 31st. The men of the latter unit were compelled, therefore, to take up the somewhat cramped accommodation afforded by the remainder of the line.

The night was cold and misty, and in the dank darkness preparations for the attack to be launched on the following day went forward. The men took up their battle positions, ammunition and water were brought forward and placed in convenient caches, and

the four Colt machine guns were brought up and placed in position in the front line.

The van of the attack was assigned to the men of B and D Companies, the former on the right and the latter on the left. These companies, each accompanied by a section of the Battalion Grenade Platoon, were to advance in two waves, each consisting of two platoons, at an interval of 30 yards. A third wave, consisting of two platoons of C Company, was to follow, one of these platoons being in support of each of the leading companies, for which it was to act as a carrying and consolidating party. C Company was also called upon to provide the garrisons for two posts, known as "D" and "E" Posts, each garrison to consist of one officer and 30 other ranks, with a Lewis gun. The reserve position in Sugar Trench was allocated to A Company, which was to advance to the front line as soon as it was evacuated by the attacking waves.

Throughout the morning the men waited in their assembly positions for the barrage which would announce zero hour; and as time passed the inevitable tension of the situation became more and more manifest.

There is, perhaps, nothing more trying to the fortitude of officers and men than the waiting which intervenes, when all preparations have been completed, before the signal is given to go over the top. Out there in the open, amid the whistle of rifle and machine-gun bullets, death awaits for many, and each individual man is acutely aware that he himself may be numbered as one of that many. Men stand in silence, or converse in low voices, often breaking off absent mindedly in the middle of a sentence; feet move restlessly, and hands pluck irritably at the collars of shirt or tunic; officers, at the cost of an effort known only to themselves, preserve an outward nonchalance which is betrayed by the too frequent glances at the dials of their wrist watches. To all the minutes pass on leaden feet until at last the waiting is over and the tension snaps into swift and desperate, but welcome, action.

The first casualties occurred quite early in the day. During the morning the enemy maintained a steady artillery fire against Courcelette and the rearward areas. Among the wounded were Capt. H. Sawley, who had been sent to act as liaison officer with the 14th Battalion, and Lieut. Simpson, command of B Company thus developing upon Captain Johnson, an attached officer.

At 12.30 p.m. the British artillery brought down a terrific bombardment upon the enemy positions, which lasted for nine minutes. Unfortunately the range was not quite correct, and most of the shells fell some fifty yards to the rear of the German trenches. The barrage then lifted and played 130 yards behind the front line. To this bombardment the enemy replied with a terrific barrage upon the ruined buildings of Courcelette, which filled the whole atmosphere with the smoke of high explosives and the dust and debris of destruction.

Through this screen of smoke and dust the attacking waves of infantry moved forward, to emerge into a murderous fire from rifle and machine gun. Here was no dazed and demoralized enemy, crouching amid the ruins of his shattered defences, but a resolute foe sheltered in almost undamaged trenches. The British barrage had failed in its purpose, and the morale of the enemy was unshaken. The defending forces were composed, moreover, of German Marines, the best fighting material which was available. The German Higher Command, no less than the British, realized fully the tactical importance of the positions which were under dispute, and had taken every possible step to render them secure.

In spite of the deadly fire from the enemy and the severe casualties which it inflicted, the leading platoons of the 31st Battalion moved forward until within bombing distance of the opposing trenches. Here they were met with such a storm of bombs and machine-gun fire that further progress was rendered impossible, and the survivors of the attacking waves sought shelter in shell holes.

Very soon the situation became critical. The men of the first wave were pinned down in their shell holes, while enemy snipers took toll of their numbers and bursts of machine-gun fire were continually directed at the lips of every crater. On either side parties of Canadian troops could be seen moving forward with their flanks in the air, while a continual rain of shells beat down upon the whole area of the advance, blowing in existing shell holes and spraying the ground with shrapnel.

Neither B nor D Company were successful in gaining their objectives. Attempt after attempt was made to go forward and to come to grips with the enemy, and time after time the ranks of

of the attacking troops withered under the hail of rifle and machine-gun bullets from the enemy positions. It was the repetition of an old story, and showed once again the utter futility of an infantry attack, no matter how gallantly executed, against a strongly entrenched and unshaken enemy. Nothing could have exceeded the dogged courage and grim determination exhibited that day by the men of the 31st Battalion, but all their efforts were unavailing.

In view of the comparatively small numbers engaged, the casualties were appalling. Capt. Johnson, the only surviving officer of B Company, was killed at zero hour upon leaving the assault trenches. Command of the Company was then taken over by the senior N.C.O. present until Lieut. H. Kennedy arrived from A Company. This officer then assumed command of the two platoons on the right of the Sunken Road, which divided the Company front. The two platoons on the left of the road were in charge of Sergt. Don Murray, who displayed great initiative and courage in the manner in which he handled his men.

At 4.45 p.m., Lieut. Kennedy organized a determined effort to gain the objectives assigned to the right attack of the 31st Battalion. By this time the situation had become desperate and the necessity to advance imperative. On either flank operating units, facing sectors of the line which had not been missed by the British barrage, had gone forward, and it was essential that the gap in the advancing line should be filled.

Gathering every available man, Lieut. Kennedy led the survivors of No. 5 and No. 7 platoons, under Sergeants McMullen and Murray respectively, in a furious dash across "No Man's Land" towards the enemy positions. Close behind him came the remnants of the other two platoons. The enemy immediately opened up with machine-gun and rifle fire, raking the lines of advancing men unmercifully. Once again the survivors were compelled to take shelter in shell holes.

For a time the enemy continued to pour burst after burst of machine-gun bullets at the shell holes which sheltered the men of the 31st Battalion, and Lieut. Kennedy decided to lie low until the barrage died down. After a while the fire slackened, and once again this gallant officer gathered a handful of intrepid followers for yet another attempt to rush the enemy's lines. At the signal the men again dashed forward until they had almost reached the

opposing trenches, when once again the barrage of machine-gun and rifle fire drove them to the ground in shell holes. These craters were found to be untenable, however, and all that remained of B Company made for a trench in the fork of the two Miraumont roads. Here they held out until the second advance came to their assistance after nightfall.

Meanwhile the experiences of D Company had been similar to those of their comrades on the right. It had suffered as severely as had B Company, and had striven with equal valor and equal lack of success. All its officers and most of its N. C. O.'s were casualties, and such survivors as were able to do so had gradually drifted back to the jumping-off trenches.

During the day's operations only one minor success was gained by the men of the 31st Battalion. On the extreme right of the attack one of the patrols of C Company, with a Lewis gun, had succeeded quite early in reaching its objective, and had managed to get its gun into position on the left flank of the 29th Battalion. Throughout the day this patrol retained its position, and fought its gun against the machine-gun posts of the enemy.

At 5.10 p.m. the Germans having definitely repulsed the attack on the 31st Battalion front, launched in their turn an assault upon the positions of the Alberta unit, which were at that time occupied by the men of A Company. The German concentration had been observed, however, by the sentries of the garrison, and as the gray-clad troops swarmed over the parapet and across "No Man's Land," they were given a sample of the treatment meted out to B and D Companies. Such a storm of machine-gun and rifle fire met them from the Canadian positions, and from shell holes in which survivors of the attacking waves still lurked, that they were rapidly driven back to the protection of their own trenches. In the meantime Col. Bell, upon receiving information from A Company that the enemy forces were gathering for an attack, collected such men as remained at Battalion Headquarters, and, with his Adjutant, Capt. Hornby, made his way to the forward trenches. By the time he reached the line the attack had been repulsed, but the Officer Commanding remained for over an hour with his men and assisted in the consolidation of the line. Urgent orders from Brigade then compelled him to return to his headquarters dugout. This was reached at 7.00 p.m., as dusk was

falling, and the orders awaiting him were to the effect that a further attack was to be organized against the difficult ground in the fork of the two sunken Miraumont roads.

Col. Bell immediately proceeded to make his dispositions for the coming attack. Zero hour was fixed for 11 o'clock that evening. By this time there were few survivors of the 31st Battalion, and two companies of the 27th were sent up to reinforce the sadly weakened unit.

Some idea of the losses suffered by the 31st Battalion may be gathered by a comparison of the composition of the night attack with that of the afternoon. In the latter the first and second waves required only two companies, in the former they required every surviving member of all four companies.

For the night attack the first wave was composed of A and B Companies of the 31st Battalion, and the second wave of C and D Companies. Four platoons of the 27th Battalion made up the third wave, and A Company of the same unit was held in reserve.

Arrangements were made for the artillery to open up on the enemy positions before the commencement of the attack, and ten minutes to the zero hour guns of all calibres crashed out in a terrific bombardment. Unfortunately the duration of this preliminary barrage was insufficient, and, as in the case of the earlier attack, the range was too long. Lieut. H. Kennedy, watching the shell bursts from the Maraumont Road, saw that the barrage never rested upon the enemy lines at all, but spent its fury on the open ground to the rear. It would appear that the supporting artillery, through some error or some inaccuracy of information, had a wrong location of the German trenches. In fighting on such a scale as that of the Somme such mistakes were bound to occur, and must not be taken as detracting from the splendid standard of efficiency maintained by the artillery as a whole during this great battle. Unfortunately for the 31st Battalion the error, in this case, was on its frontage, and for this error it was called upon to pay a heavy price.

The German artillery made no such mistake, but brought down a heavy barrage upon the ranks of the advancing Canadians. Once again the men maintained a steady fire on the enemy trenches, and inflicted casualties on those of his troops who showed themselves

in the open; but, under the remorseless pounding of the enemy artillery they, in their turn, suffered losses, and every passing minute meant a diminution in the number of their effective bayonets. Capt. L'Amy, leading forward A Company on the left of the attack, was buried by a shell, and Lieut. Gordon, when hurrying to his assistance, was hit and instantly killed.

Lieut. Kennedy and his little party of B Company were still in the trench at the fork of the two Miraumont roads, gamely fighting back at enemy snipers. Shortly after 11.00 p.m. this party found itself reinforced by Capt. McCaw and 20 of his men from the 27th Battalion, who had managed to slip through. The two forces united, and, launching a sudden attack upon a section of trench occupied by the enemy, succeeded in capturing it. This established contact with the 29th Battalion on the right, but it was still impossible to connect with Capt. L'Amy's force on the left, as the latter was still in "No Man's Land." The remnant of B Company, with the men under Capt. McCaw, had now reached the original objective, and at once proceeded to consolidate the position. Here they were joined by the patrol of the 31st Battalion, with its Lewis gun, which had managed to get forward earlier in the day, and which had dug itself into a shell hole in front of the German line.

All night the enemy continued to shell the area occupied by the 31st Battalion, and to spray the ground with rifle and machine-gun bullets. In spite of this posts were pushed forward on the left towards the German line. In the Miraumont Road area Lieut. Kennedy sent forward a corporal and five men to give warning of any approach of hostile forces, while Capt. McCaw sent a Lewis gun and crew to establish a post about 50 yards from the road so as to command the approach and beat off any counter-attack which might be attempted.

It was 3.30 a.m. on September 27th when a runner, dispatched by Lieut. Kennedy, reached Battalion Headquarters with the news that the objective had been reached and the position consolidated. Col. Bell at once realized the importance of retaining the captured ground, and ordered A Company of the 27th Battalion to go forward and reinforce the right. The Company, reduced in numbers to less than a full platoon, moved up and in due course reached the position held by the party under Lieut. Kennedy.

Throughout the early morning there was continual sniping on the part of both of the opposing forces, punctuated by bursts of machine-gun fire. The enemy also continued to direct an accurate, but not an excessively heavy, bombardment against the positions held by the 31st Battalion, to which the supporting British artillery replied with good effect. During the afternoon the post on the West Miraumont Road was pushed forward about a hundred yards. At the same time it was discovered that the east end of the German line, between the two sunken Miraumont roads, was unoccupied, and later it became clear that the Germans had retired along the entire front from the Bapaume Road to the Courcelette Trench. In view of this changed situation, fresh battalions were immediately ordered up to occupy the positions vacated by the enemy. It was not until 7.00 p.m., however, that Capt. L'Amy, having dug himself out of his temporary grave in "No Man's Land" in the early hours of the morning, led the remnant of his company, to the number of some 25 men, into the German trenches and thus completed the occupation of the whole of the original objective. In the meantime the Corps cavalry had gone into action for the first time, and had swept down upon the enemy at Destremont Farm on the Bapaume Road.

During the evening, and far into the night, patrols of the 27th and 31st Battalions reconnoitred the ground in the vicinity of East Miraumont Road and Courcelette Trench. They found indications which suggested that the portion of Regina Trench on the front occupied by their respective units was not garrisoned. As a result of this information the 26th Battalion, which had already been ordered forward and had taken up its position in Sugar Trench, was instructed to push through the 31st Battalion and along the Courcelette Trench and the Miraumont roads. In accordance with these orders the 26th Battalion moved through the front line of the 31st at 5.40 a.m. on September 28th, and its Commanding Officer established himself at the headquarters dugout of the Alberta unit.

The first report received of the operations of the 26th Battalion was to the effect that it could not get forward owing to the fact that Regina Trench was strongly held by the enemy. Later on in the day it became evident that there was some confusion in regard to the location of the line held by this unit, one report stating

that it was already in Regina Trench and another that this trench was held by the enemy. In order to clarify the situation two scouts of the 31st Battalion, Langtry and Curtis, who were thoroughly familiar with the ground, were sent out. They discovered that the front line of the 26th Battalion was actually in the rear of Regina Trench. Continuing their reconnaissance the two scouts made their way up the Courcelette Trench and at about 2.30 p.m. reached the junction of that trench with the Regina Line. The latter was found to be unoccupied, although there were signs that it had not long been deserted. Later in the day, however, the Regina Trench was again reported as occupied; and when, at 6 o'clock, the 26th Battalion assaulted the position, it was repulsed by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and compelled to fall back upon the positions of the 31st Battalion. It subsequently appeared probable that this trench was, at the time, being used as a main communication trench, garrisoned permanently only by isolated posts.

The advent of darkness on the night of September 28th, brought with it heavy shell fire, and an attack launched on the left of the 31st Battalion failed. By 9 o'clock, however, the Corps line had gone slightly forward in the vicinity of the Miraumont roads and to the east, where it ran around the Practice Trenches.

By this time news had reached the 31st Battalion that it was to be relieved by a company of the 22nd, and preparations were made to expedite the handing over of the line. On the following morning the relief was accomplished, and the remnants of the 31st Battalion, and of the companies of the 27th which had been attached to it, left the line upon which they had fought with so much gallantry and met with such appalling losses. It was late when the men, exhausted by the fighting and the long march over roads made slippery by heavy rain, eventually reached bivouac at Tara Hill.

The casualties of the four days fighting in the 31st Battalion were tragic. Omitting Capt. Johnson, who was not on the Battalion cadre, out of the 22 officers who had gone into action only six returned. Two had been killed, eleven wounded and three were missing. Of the other ranks 60 were known to have been killed, 209 were wounded and 113 were missing, bringing the total casualties to 398. Among the killed was Sergt. Profit, who was post-

humously awarded the D.C.M. for the excellent work he had accomplished on September 15th. Lieuts. Arbuckle and Gordon, only recently commissioned from the ranks, were dead. Capt. Johnson had been instantly killed upon leaving the assault trenches, and Capt. Page and Lieut. Simpson died within a few days of their wounds. Major Gilker and Lieuts. Eccles and Thom were missing, nothing having been heard of them since September 27th. On the night of September 29th the total strength of the Battalion, including reinforcements which had arrived during the action and men left behind in the transport lines, was about 360 of all ranks.

No report of the fighting on the Somme would be complete without a reference to the splendid work done by Capt. H. W. MacGill, the Battalion Medical Officer. Throughout both actions he rendered excellent service, dealing with the problems involved in the large number of casualties in a most efficient manner. In the second action, in particular, his achievement in maintaining a regimental aid post in the village of Courcelette throughout the whole of the fighting and under heavy shell-fire was most inspiring.

X.

The last two days of September were spent by the men of the 31st Battalion in reorganization. Promotions were made from the ranks to fill the gaps in the officers' cadre, and such reinforcements as were available were posted to the companies.

In the meantime the Canadian troops were again massing for the attack, and on October 1st the 3rd Canadian Division once more returned to the line. Here it was again called upon to operate along the Hessian Trench, the remainder of the Corps frontage being taken over by the 2nd Division.

The objectives of the attack were the Regina Trench line in general on the north, and on the right flank a line running east and west across the open country from the junction of this line with the East Miraumont Road. The attack on the right was assigned to the 4th Brigade, while the objectives of the 5th Brigade included the triangle formed by the eastern section of Regina Trench and the Kenora and Courcelette Trenches. The particularly difficult task of capturing this triangle was allotted to the 22nd, 24th and 25th Battalions, all greatly reduced in strength by

recent casualties. The left of the Canadian line, up to the Corps boundary, was held by the 8th Brigade, composed of the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles.

October 1st was a day of warmth and mellow sunshine, typical of early autumn, and at a little after 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Canadian troops went forward to an attack which was destined to prove a costly, but gallant, failure.

The 31st Battalion, with its sister units of the 6th Brigade, was in corps reserve, and at 6.00 p.m. the Battalion was paraded to move up to the reserve positions. These proved to be located between two lines of guns which kept up a perpetual fire all night. The enemy artillery, in searching for the battery positions, dropped a number of shells in and near the line occupied by the men of the Alberta unit, and several were hit, including Capt. L'Amy, who was wounded by a shell splinter in the mouth and was sent back to the field ambulance. Only four of the original officers now remained, and the total fighting strength of the Battalion was little more than one full company.

In the meantime the attacking troops had fared badly. Faced by strong positions strongly held, and not seriously smashed by the artillery barrage, little progress could be made. The Canadian line was advanced slightly north-east of Courcellette, but apart from this the whole of the main positions remained in enemy hands. The Canadian casualties were serious, the 5th Brigade having a particularly gruelling time. Entering the action with only just over 1,700 bayonets, or less than one half of full strength, this Brigade lost over fifty per cent. of its effectives, and emerged with barely 770 survivors. Other units suffered almost as badly; brigades were reduced in numbers to the equivalent of battalions and battalions mustered, after the action, rifles sufficient only to form one full company. Generously indeed had the men of the Dominion contributed to the "blood bath of the Somme," and even yet it was not the end.

Following the attack of October 1st operations were suspended for a few days to enable the artillery to get into position for a fresh bombardment. On the 8th the offensive was renewed by the 1st and 3rd Divisions, with no better results than those of the earlier attack. The enemy fought desperately with every

arm available, and poured in reinforcements without stint whenever his line was threatened. Rain, with its resulting slippery mud, added to the difficulties of the attacking troops, and in the end the action had to be broken off without the attainment of any material advantage.

By this time the Canadian Corps was terribly reduced in strength and badly in need of rest and reorganization. The heavy casualties and lack of tangible success had damped, for the moment, the spirits of the men. They were weary, and exhausted by the continual strain of fighting, and had small reserves of physical and nervous energy upon which to draw.

After the abortive efforts of October 8th the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions, upon which the brunt of the fighting had developed, were withdrawn from the line, leaving behind them the 4th Division. So far no mention has been made of this junior and recently joined addition to the strength of the Canadian Corps. At this time it had still to win for itself a fighting reputation, and the right to take its place with the senior divisions of the Corps in their more vital operations.

Organized in England during the actions of Hooge and Sanctuary Wood, the 4th Canadian Division had crossed to France late in August, and had first entered the line before Ypres, relieving the 2nd Division. Here it had acquitted itself well, without being afforded a chance to distinguish itself, the worst of the fighting having concluded before it entered the line. During the fighting on the Somme which has already been described the newly organized Division, as yet lacking in battle experience and still untried, had not played any major part. Consequently it was more or less intact at the time that the other sadly shattered divisions of the Corps were withdrawn from the Somme area.

Not for long, however, was the 4th Division to suffer the invidious distinction of being relegated to the background. Left behind on the Somme by the rest of the Corps, it soon distinguished itself by completing the work commenced by its comrades of the senior divisions. On November 18th the new Division, in co-operation with the II. (British) Corps, made a series of brilliant attacks upon the Regina Trench. As a result of this action the stubborn defence of the enemy was broken down; and by nightfall

not only the Regina Trench, but the Desire Line established by the enemy to its rear, were in Canadian hands. Once more the troops of the Dominion had accompanied that which they had set out to do. A few weeks later the 4th Division, having completed the consolidation of the newly won positions, was withdrawn from the line and rejoined the Canadian Corps before Vimy. With this withdrawal the work of the Canadians on the Somme was brought to a close.

XI.

The Battle of the Somme did much to enhance the fighting reputation of the Canadian Corps, lustrous although it was already. Between September 7th and October 8th, trench after trench and position after position had been stormed and captured by the men of the Dominion — trenches and positions of abnormal strength and regarded as impregnable by the enemy: The Sugar Factory, with Sugar, Candy and Macdonnell trenches; the strongly fortified sunken road south and west of Courcelette, and the strong defences of the village itself; Zollern Graben and Fabeck Graben to the north, and Gunpit Lane to the west. Later on the Hessian positions, Regina Trench and the Desire Line to its rear, had fallen to the Canadian attacks. In all, the Canadians had advanced, roughly, a distance of 3,000 yards to the north, and almost as far to the west, from its original positions.

The campaign of the Somme as a whole failed in its main objective of breaking through the enemy lines and rolling back the whole of the Western Front. The massed British cavalry, waiting patiently in the neighbourhood of Albert to ride through the enemy defences, waited in vain.

Fighting grimly for every yard, the enemy was pressed back along a wide front. Position after position was taken, but always fresh positions were being prepared in the rear; village after village was captured, or wiped out of existence by the terrible artillery bombardments; along a wide front a great wedge was driven into the German positions and much territory was regained; but the line remained unbroken.

Casualties on both sides were extremely heavy, and, on balance, nearly equal. The Allies captured 350 enemy guns of

all calibres, and took 65,000 prisoners, the aggregate German losses being nearly 600,000 men. On their side the Allies lost approximately 650,000 in killed, wounded and missing, the British 450,000 and the French 200,000.

Perhaps the most important result of the fighting was the blow which it dealt to the enemy morale. The German Higher Command had held the belief that the New Armies of the British Empire were composed of incompetently led and inefficient amateur soldiers, quite incapable of standing against the trained professionals of the Fatherland, and this belief had been assiduously propagated among the troops. The Battle of the Somme effectually shattered any such illusions, and opened the eyes of the enemy to the unpleasant fact that the Empire had put into the field an army not only great in numbers, but one which in courage, competence and efficiency was comparable to that immortal force, the "Old Contemptibles," whose deeds had won, in 1914, the admiration of friend and foe alike.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Second Winter

I.

At 12.55 p.m. on Wednesday, October 4th, the 31st Canadian Infantry Battalion marched out of Brickfields Camp, where it had been in bivouac overnight, en route for Warloy. For the Alberta unit the bloody ordeal of the Somme was over.

Of the men who had marched southward but four weeks since little more than a hundred remained to share in the backward march; and, scattered sparsely through the ranks of this handful of men, were a few of those who had entrained at Calgary less than a year and a half earlier. Of the original Battalion only a small leavening now remained to carry on the tradition of the unit and to imbue new drafts with its spirit. Fortunately, among these few survivors were the Commanding Officer, whose personality and leadership had played so great a part in shaping that spirit and in establishing that tradition, and his Second-in-Command who, ever since the formation of the Battalion, had supported so ably his superior officer.

Of the remainder, many were dead or permanently disabled, and would march no more with their comrades of the 31st Battalion; many were missing — killed or in enemy hands; many were in hospital, or convalescent camp recovering from wounds; and some few had transferred to other units or arms of the service.

The past six months had been extremely costly to Col. Bell's command. In the four major actions alone — St. Eloi (April 3rd to 9th), Hooge (June 5th to 9th), and the two engagements at Courcelette — the Battalion had lost 202 of all ranks killed in action and 890 in wounded and missing. Of these totals the first does not include those who subsequently died of wounds and the second takes no account of men sent down to hospital suffering from sickness, while neither total includes the considerable

casualties suffered by the unit in the ordinary course of trench warfare between the major actions. The fighting at Courcelette had cost 664 casualties, 123 killed and 541 wounded and missing, while of the officers' cadre the six months of war had taken toll to the extent of 13 killed, 48 wounded and 4 missing.

II.

At Warloy the men of the 31st Battalion went under canvas, and the day of October 5th was spent in reorganization and in taking on the strength a number of reinforcements which had arrived from England. On the following day the march was resumed.

The route lay through La Vicogne, Halloy-Les-Pernois, Fieffes and Candas to Gezaincourt, which was reached on October 10th. At Halloy-Les-Pernois the Battalion had rested for two days, during which the work of reorganization had been proceeded with. At this point, also, several former officers had rejoined in the persons of Majors E. S. Doughty and W. W. Piper and Lieuts. R. Downie and W. C. Bradburn. Lieut. D. B. Forbes also reported for duty. While at Pernois news was received that the unit would not return to the Somme, but would take over a sector of the line held by the IV. Corps of the First British Army south of Loos.

From Gezaincourt the march continued by way of Canteleux, Maizieres and Herlin-Le-Vert to Frevillers, where the Column rested during the day of October 14th. From this point officers of the several battalions of the 6th Brigade proceeded forward by bus to survey the area which was to be taken over. On the following day the last stage of the march to Hersin was completed, the Battalion entering the town with band playing an accompaniment to the cheers of the population which lined the streets. Here the unit was joined by Lieut. A. C. T. Booth and a draft of 80 other ranks from England.

The journey from the Somme had been a leisurely one, and had afforded the men an opportunity to rest and to recuperate after the ordeal of the terrible fighting in the southern battle area. En route substantial reinforcements had been received, which included a number of old members of the Battalion who had been wounded earlier in the year. By the time it re-entered the line, on

the night of October 16th, the unit had recovered, to a large extent, from the punishment it had received at Courcellette.

The 31st Battalion took over the line occupied by the 8th Service Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry, which was attached to the 63rd Brigade of the 37th British Division. The part of the front taken over was known as the Left Sector, Souchez 2, and was located just in front of Lens.

The sector proved to be a very quiet one. Except for minewevers, which were a continual menace, and occasional sniping, the enemy gave little trouble, and behind the lines on either side there was small evidence of war's destruction. This sector was in the centre of a mining district, and the neighbouring villages were occupied; for the most part, by miners. They appeared to be fully inhabited, and were little damaged by shell fire. So quiet was the front that school children frequently approached within a mile of the line and sold chocolate and cigarettes to the troops. At night it was sometimes almost uncannily still, the silence being unbroken by crack of rifle, chatter of machine gun or crash of high-explosive shell.

After the shell-torn terrains of St. Eloi, the Salient and the Somme, with their shattered villages and their woods reduced to splintered stumps of trees, this orderly and undamaged countryside seemed strange to Canadian eyes, while the quietness was a welcome contrast to the thunder of artillery and the crash of bursting shells.

The line in this sector was defended by a series of posts located at the ends of saps running out from the main positions. The situation of the trenches was by no means ideal, as it was commanded by the enemy from the neighbouring heights of Vimy Ridge. Their condition also left much to be desired on account of recent rains, and immediately upon taking over the work of revetting and reclaiming was commenced under the supervision of Major E. S. Doughty.

The first tour of the 31st Battalion in the line was without excitement. The rain poured down practically the whole of the time, and rendered still worse the deplorable condition of the trenches. On October 17th Col. Bell, who had been on leave for the past nine days, reported back and took over the duties of

Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, who was temporarily in command of the 2nd Division.

On Sunday, October 22nd, the 31st Battalion was relieved by the 28th, and moved out to the Lorette Spur, Battalion Headquarters being established at Ablain St. Nazaire. By this time winter, with its rain and mud, had set in, and there was little prospect of further serious fighting until the spring sunshine had dried the ground sufficiently to permit of freer movement. On both sides troops were settling down to the long and uncomfortable routine of trench warfare in winter.

III.

For the remainder of the year 1916 the 31st Battalion followed the usual routine of an infantry unit on the Western Front in winter. The men entered and left the line at regular intervals, working when work was to be done and playing when they could. Occasionally they enjoyed the luxury of a hot bath and a change of clothing, and sometimes the comfort of quarters that were warm and dry. In rotation they experienced the delirious pleasure of a few days' leave. Sometimes concerts were organized when the Battalion was out of the line, and church parades were held on Sundays whenever circumstances permitted. For the most part, however, the men spent their time in muck and mire under the barrage of a pitiless rain. The weather was typical of winter weather on the Western Front as experienced during the war, and nothing worse than this can possibly be said about it. Under the continual downpour trenches became water-logged, dugouts filled and parapet and parados continually collapsed into the trenches. Men, drenched to the skin and plastered with mud to the waist, laboured incessantly and uselessly with shovel, pump and bucket to keep down the water and to induce parapet and parados to stay where they belonged. Other men, equally wet and muddy, slipped and splashed and floundered through mud-choked communication trenches carrying supplies up the the line. Drenched sentries shivered at their posts as they gazed across the drowned desolation of "No Man's Land."

The sector remained quiet, but both in and out of the line there was continual work to be done. Behind the main defence positions strong points and support trenches had to be prepared.

The portion of the 31st Battalion in this work was a section of the Lorette Defences consisting of two divided positions which came to be known as the Normal and Battle positions respectively. When the men were not engaged in labouring to keep the front-line trenches from complete obliteration they were usually employed in strengthening and extending these supporting systems.

During October a number of officer reinforcements joined the Battalion, some of them being returned casualties. Among the latter were Capt. W. Jewitt and Lieuts. D. C. Robertson, S. R. Tompkins and N. B. Weir. Lieut. H. J. Quinlan also reported for duty with 18 signallers, to reinforce the greatly depleted Signal Section.

By the end of the month the front-line trenches, in spite of the labour expended upon them, had become untenable on account of the continual rain, and were abandoned. The communication trenches were strengthened and, as far as possible, put into a state of defence. On the 30th day of the month H. R. H., the Duke of Connaught, visited the Headquarters of the 2nd Canadian Division, and all Battalion commanders were introduced to him.

Early in November Col. Bell returned from Brigade Headquarters and resumed command of the 31st Battalion, and on the 6th the men paraded for the first test of the recently issued box respirators which had replaced the older type of gas masks. Lachrymatory gas was employed, and the men found the new equipment much more effective than the old had been. On the same day Capt. A. Blair returned to the Battalion after some months' absence with the Intelligence Corps, and brought with him a new officer in the person of Lieut. N. Franks.

On November 12th the Corps Commander, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Julian Byng, visited the Battalion lines. He was accompanied by his Chief-of-Staff, Brig.-Gen. Radcliffe, and the Divisional Commander. Twelve days later some excitement was caused by a raid on the enemy trenches carried out by the 26th Battalion, which was in position on the left of the 31st. In this the men of the Alberta Regiment co-operated by putting down a heavy trench-mortar barrage upon the opposing line and its wire entanglements. For several days the trench mortars continued in action in an effort to smash the enemy wire sufficiently to permit of a raid from the 31st Battalion lines, but the continual rain necessitated a post-

ponentment of the venture. The bombardment, however, stirred the enemy artillery to action with the result that several trenches occupied by the Canadians were rather badly smashed.

It was not until November 27th that conditions permitted the postponed raid by the men of the 31st Battalion to take place. At 2:30 a.m. the raiding party, consisting of Lieut. Curtis, a corporal and twelve men, made its way across the muddy ground of "No Man's Land" covered by an accurate barrage of Stokes' mortar and rifle grenades, and entered the enemy trenches. Immediately upon reaching the line, Lieut. Curtis with six men, proceeded down the left section of the enemy positions for a distance of 40 yards without meeting a single German. Meanwhile the corporal, in charge of the other six men, proceeded to the right until they came upon a post manned by five of the enemy. The Canadian detachment opened fire at once, killing two of the Germans and wounding a third. Upon examination, the two dead men were found to have no identification numbers, so the raiding party endeavoured to carry the bodies back to the 31st Battalion lines for a more exhaustive examination. The mud and the wire, however, defeated their purpose, although the men were still struggling with their burden when Lieut. Curtis returned and ordered a withdrawal. The enemy brought down a barrage upon the raiders as they returned to their own lines, but the party got back without casualties.

On December 3rd the Lahore Artillery left the 2nd Canadian Division and was replaced by the Canadian Divisional Artillery, which had just arrived from England. The day was dull and cold when the 19th and 20th Canadian Batteries, which had taken up position to the rear of the 31st Battalion, sent their first salvos crashing into the enemy positions.

About the middle of December the trench ordnance of the Battalion was augmented by the arrival of a large trench mortar. It was five feet long and nine inches in diameter, and was capable of throwing a shell weighing 200 pounds to a distance of over a thousand yards. The men were delighted with their new weapon, and wasted no time in trying it out upon the enemy.

A very successful trench raid by the 1st C. M. R. was carried out on December 20th upon the Battalion's right. This raid,

assisted by a very accurate artillery barrage, penetrated to the enemy's third line. Dugouts were bombed and machine-gun emplacements demolished. The raiders returned with 58 prisoners, two of them being officers.

Christmas Day, 1916, was celebrated by the 31st Battalion under circumstances somewhat more cheerful than those which had existed a year previously. The unit was out of the line at the time, and the weather was cool and cloudy. There was plenty of mud about, but the rearward area did not present the same desolation of churned muck and contamination as had that behind the Kemmel trenches. Moreover, quite a successful effort was made in the direction of seasonable festivity. On Christmas Day half the Battalion sat down to a real Yule-tide feast — turkey with sausage dressing, cabbage and potatoes followed by plum pudding, candy, cigarettes and tea, while, greatest treat of all, real English beer was served by way of beverage. The Battalion Band played selections during dinner, and afterwards put on an excellent minstrel concert which was greatly appreciated. In short, considering the circumstances, a very pleasant day was spent by officers and men alike.

On the following day the other half of the Battalion enjoyed similar celebrations, and on December 27th the unit was inspected by the Corps Commander, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Julian Byng. This was destined to be his last inspection of the men of the 31st, as arrangements were already under way for that reorganization of the Canadian Corps which was to place Major-Gen. Currie at its head. After reviewing the troops the Corps Commander presented ribbons to those who had won decorations during the fighting on the Somme.

The last day of the year saw the perpetration by the 31st Battalion of a rather novel form of "frightfulness." It formed a fitting climax to a year by no means devoid of achievement, and showed that the men of Alberta did not lack a sense of humour. By way of a New Year gift, the 31st Battalion sent a deluge of tons of muddy water from their own positions into the already water-logged trenches of the enemy.

The men had been, for three nights previously, engaged in digging a drain connecting their own inundated line with that of the enemy. On the night of December 31st the task was completed.

The pumps were manned and, working with a will, the instigators of the adventure sent floods of mud and water across "No Man's Land" into the German lines.

IV.

The year 1917, which was destined to prove "A Year of Victories" for the Canadian Corps, was fittingly ushered in on the 31st Battalion front by three rounds of gun fire from the Canadian artillery. During the day the pleasing occupation of removing water from Canadian to German territory continued, the men working the pumps in relays, and with a gusto worthy of a better cause than that of damping the spirits (and pants) of the enemy. A welcome change for the better in the weather assisted in the work of draining the trenches, and every hour the water level sank lower.

During the early days of the New Year the even tenor of winter trench warfare continued, with few events of moment to break the monotony. The good weather which had characterized the first day of 1917 was of short duration. Once more the rain set in, flooding trenches and dugouts, and destroying the results of the work of reclamation which the 31st Battalion had carried out.

Mutual bombardments with trench mortars were of frequent occurrence. These were supplemented, as the days passed, with increasing artillery activity on both sides. Here the enemy, with his commanding view of the British lines and his concealed gun positions on the reverse slope of Vimy Ridge, had a great advantage, and on several occasions dislocated traffic to and from the line by severe bombardments of the rearward areas. Troops moved in and out of the trenches in the usual routine of front line, brigade, divisional and corps reserve. The rain and its resulting mud were their worst enemies, and continual work was necessary in order to prevent the entire filling up of trenches with collapsed parapet and parados.

On January 1st Capt. H. Sawley and Capt. J. H. L'Amy returned to the 31st Battalion from the field ambulance, and three days later Major W. H. Hewgill made his last round of the lines before going on leave to Canada on account of the death of his father. Although entirely unsuspected at the time, the departure

of the Second-in-Command was destined to mark his severance from the Battalion which he had served so faithfully, until after the armistice. Upon his return from Canada he was asked to assume command of the 21st Reserve Battalion (Alberta) by Canadian Headquarters in London. Believing at the time that this appointment would only be temporary, Major Hewgill accepted. He had been with the 31st Battalion since its organization, and had played a major part in developing the efficiency of the unit. On several previous occasions he had refused promotion in order to remain with the Battalion which had come to mean so much to him, and his loss was deeply regretted alike by his brother officers and by his men.

In spite of the outward quietness which prevailed along that part of the front occupied by the Canadian Corps, much activity was proceeding beneath the surface. Already plans for a spring offensive against the heights of Vimy Ridge had been completed, and everywhere preparations were going forward in anticipation of the attack. Munitions were being accumulated, gun positions prepared, new trenches constructed and saps driven underground towards the enemy positions. Infantry units which were to participate were withdrawn from the line for reorganization and intensive training, and other preliminary work of a like nature was carried out.

The turn of the 31st Battalion to leave for the rear came on January 17th when, at 9.00 a.m., it took the road for La Comte en route for Ourton. The weather was bitterly cold, with frequent snow flurries. At La Comte, where the Battalion rested for a day, the billets were anything but weather-proof, and the men suffered a good deal on account of the inclement conditions. Ourton was reached on January 19th, and the troops settled into their billets and proceeded to make themselves comfortable.

On the following day intensive training commenced. A musketry range was constructed by the men, and much time was devoted to rifle shooting. The tactics of company and platoon attack were studied and practiced, and route marches were included in the programme.

The weather continued cold, and made the training unpleasant, particularly the musketry, which had to be abandoned for a day or so on account of the severe conditions.

Training continued until January 30th, when the Battalion moved to Burbure, where it was immediately resumed. On February 3rd the 6th Brigade assembled for a route march to Canadian Army Headquarters at Lillers, a distance of nine miles. Three days later, Major-Gen. Burstall inspected the Battalion on parade, the muster for the occasion numbering 25 officers and 816 other ranks. After the inspection presentation of medal ribbons was made to Sergt. F. C. Bennett, Corp. F. Smith and Ptes. C. A. Wear and E. R. Huguet.

Later in the afternoon some interesting photographs were taken of the officers and men who had been serving with the 6th Brigade when it first arrived in France. These photographs were of the original officers, officers promoted from the ranks, and all ranks of the original Brigade. For the first and second of these photographs the 31st Battalion's contribution was only seven in each case; and, for the third, 13 officers and 214 other ranks out of an original strength of 32 officers and 992 other ranks.

On February 8th, Col. Bell and eight of his officers proceeded, with other representatives of the 6th Brigade, to look over the new area which the Canadians were to occupy, and two days later the return march to the trenches commenced. Mont St. Eloy was reached at 2.00 p.m. on February 12th, the 31st Battalion taking over the huts vacated by the 4th C.M.R.'s.

On its first tour in the line the Alberta Regiment was under the command of Major W. W. Piper, Col. Bell being temporarily in command of the Brigade. The frontage allotted to the Battalion had a length of 900 yards, and the line was continuous. It was supplemented by a number of saps leading forward to mine craters, some of which were linked laterally. As these saps were manned day and night, they afforded considerable protection to the main line of defence. On the right of the 31st Battalion the 51st Scottish Division continued the line and on the left the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade was stationed.

Once again the routine of trench warfare was resumed, broken by periods of intensive training in the rearward areas for the coming offensive. The weather, fine and frosty at first, soon changed once more to rain, to the serious detriment of the trenches. The enemy continued to remain inactive, and made little retaliation to occasional bombardments of the Canadian artillery.

Meanwhile preparations for the approaching offensive were pushed ahead with increased expedition. New trenches and assembly tunnels for the assaulting troops were excavated along the entire frontage. Battle headquarters were linked by buried cable. To the rear new roads were constructed and light railway lines were laid. Emplacements were dug for trench mortars and gas projectors, and new gun pits were excavated, while dumps for ammunition and engineering material were established at convenient points.

On March 9th the 6th Brigade was reviewed at Maisnil-Bouche by the Right Hon. R. L. Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, who was accompanied by the Hon. Robert Rogers and the Hon. J. D. Hazen. The Corps Staff, including Prince Arthur of Connaught, was present, as was also the Staff of the 2nd Canadian Division.

On the following day the 31st Battalion commenced a most intensive course of training and instruction which lasted until March 24th. On the 15th, at Grand Servins, the whole of the 6th Brigade went through a rehearsal of the proposed attack under the eyes of the Divisional Commander. The area was laid out to represent as accurately as possible the terrain to the rear of the enemy lines which was to be attacked by the Brigade, the lifting of the barrage being signalled by means of flags. Contact work between infantry and aeroplanes was practiced, and everything possible was done to make the rehearsal as near to the real thing as possible. The practice attack was carried out with a clock-like precision which augured well for the future, and which imbued all concerned with an added feeling of confidence. Further rehearsals on subsequent days brought the operation to as near mechanical perfection as was possible, and made of the Brigade as fine an aggregation of shock troops as had been seen on the Western Front. The last of these took place on March 23rd, and after it was over the men returned to their billets to make ready for an early move. In the meantime, Col. Bell and his company officers had been ordered forward to reconnoitre the Thelus Sector of the line, upon which the 31st Battalion was to operate in the approaching offensive.

By this time further drafts from England had joined the Battalion. Early in March 90 reinforcements reported from the

base, and were put through an intensive course of drill and gas attack instruction, while later in the month a number of officers reported for duty with the unit. These included Lieut. W. R. Wooley-Dod, who had been wounded at Hooge, and Lieuts. L. H. Irwin, R. G. W. Eland, C. A. Cunliffe and J. H. Carson.

On March 24th the 6th Brigade returned from its training area at Petit Servins to Mont St. Eloy. During the morning the German artillery awoke to fresh activity, bombarding the town and the Bois des Alfeux with high explosive shells of large calibre. Some 90 men were killed and wounded by this shelling, but the 31st Battalion was lucky and escaped casualties. Enemy aircraft were also exceedingly daring and active, flying low over the British lines, bombing and machine-gunning the infantry, and fearlessly attacking the British machines, two of which were brought down in flames within a few minutes of each other.

Later in the day orders were received to relieve the 18th Battalion in the front line of the Thelus Sector. Here a three-company frontage was taken over, each company having three platoons in the line and one in reserve at Zivy Cave. The fourth company was placed in support, and was also accommodated in the cave, together with the supporting troops of the 28th Battalion.

Zivy Cave was an extensive system of subterranean tunnels, and had been a mine in the days preceding the war. From the main excavation a number of galleries and shafts had been driven into the chalk, and when the 31st Battalion entered the line a deep tunnel was in course of construction leading from the cave to the right flank of the unit's frontage. In addition to this, there were several other tunnels giving access to the underground galleries. The cave was fitted with a large number of bunks, and electric light was installed during the stay of Col. Bell's command in the line. In addition to affording cover to a large number of men the excavations also accommodated dumps of the 4th, 5th and 6th Brigades, and a great deal of other war impedimenta.

The Thelus Sector consisted of a continuous trench supplemented by an outpost line of craters connected by saps to the main trench system. The position, with Zivy Cave in its rear, was a strong one, but was uncomfortably open to observation and gun fire from the commanding heights of Vimy Ridge.

Artillery activity on both sides marked the first two or three days of this tour in the trenches. On March 26th the enemy brought down a heavy bombardment on the Battalion's lines, doing much damage to trenches and communication trenches and compelling Capt. McGill, the Medical Officer, to move his regimental aid posts from Guillemont Trench to a position less exposed to the enemy's guns. During the next two days the Canadian artillery maintained a heavy and almost continuous bombardment of the German positions on the Ridge, to which the enemy guns replied with an ever increasing ferocity.

V.

As the date fixed for the opening of the offensive against the heights of Vimy Ridge drew nearer, it became increasingly necessary to obtain information regarding the disposition of the enemy, the units which manned his positions and other data which might prove helpful in planning and executing the attack. In order to obtain such information, as well as to test the morale of the opposing forces and to inflict as much damage as possible upon their positions, a number of raids were organized and carried out all along the Canadian front. These had as their objectives the taking of prisoners and the bombing of dugouts, machine-gun posts and other defensive works. Their results varied greatly, ranging from disaster to the raiding parties to complete success.

On the early morning of March 29th raids were carried out by parties of the 13th, 14th and 27th Battalions. The first two failed completely, the trenches being strongly held by the enemy and the raiders driven off with loss. The third met with partial success, the men of the Winnipeg Regiment entering the enemy positions, which were undefended, and doing some damage before retiring. This raid, however, brought down a heavy barrage on the front and support lines of the 31st Battalion, six men being killed and six wounded as a result.

The turn of the 31st Battalion came that evening, D Company providing the raiding party. This consisted of three officers and sixty other ranks, divided into three groups. The first two groups were to enter the German trenches, establish blocks at the north and south ends respectively of the sector to be raided, and then

move towards each other through the German lines until they met. The third group, under Major W. F. Seaton, to whom the direction of the operation had been assigned, was to remain in reserve. The raid was to be covered by an artillery barrage, and by the rifle grenade and machine-gun fire of the men of A and C Companies from the front-line positions.

Zero hour for the raid was fixed for 7.20 p.m., when it was hoped to catch the enemy unprepared, most of the previous raids having occurred during the hours of darkness, or at dawn.

The evening was cold and damp when the raiders gathered in their assembly positions to wait, chilled and shivering, for the opening of the barrage. Twilight fell, and the dusk thickened towards darkness, blurring outlines and rendering landmarks indistinct. Then, suddenly, the barrage came down with a crash, stalling the dim positions of the enemy with the flashes of bursting shells and sending skywards columns of broken earth and other debris.

For five minutes a fierce bombardment blasted the enemy defences. Then it lifted and formed a box barrage around the objective of the raid. Immediately the raiders of D Company went over the top and dashed across "No Man's Land" to the enemy positions, firing rifle grenades as they went. While the men advanced a party of Germans, about ten in number, were seen to jump out of the trenches and race back through the barrage to their support lines about a hundred yards to the rear.

Except for scattered rifle fire, there was little opposition from the enemy, and the raiders had been in his lines ten minutes before retaliatory artillery fire was opened upon the Canadian positions. In the meantime Lieut. N. Appleby, commanding the right group, had entered the enemy trenches. Nobody was in sight. Two men, under Sergt. Stewart, were left to establish a block to the south, while Sergt. Elliot, with five men, went northward to examine the German positions. Close to the point of entry of the party a dugout was found which was too large for immediate demolition, and Cpl. Smith was left to act as sentry over this until a second party, which was following closely, should bring up the Stokes' bombs for demolition purposes. What immediately followed is not very clear. It appears, however, that as the latter party advanced one of its number threw a Stokes' bomb over the

head of Cpl. Smith into the dugout. Immediately two Germans rushed out, seized the bomb and tossed it back into the trench. It exploded close to Lieut. Appleby, killing him instantly, and severely wounding Cpl. Smith. The dugout was completely wrecked by the explosion, and its occupants, the number of whom was not known, were buried.

While this unfortunate incident was being enacted at the southern extremity of the raided positions, Sergt. Elliot and his men had proceeded to the north, bombing each dugout as they came to it. After proceeding some distance along the trench, this party came to a junction in the line. Taking the east fork, four large dugouts were found, each of which was bombed. From one of these three Germans emerged, and surrendered. They were immediately put over the parapet and sent back to an escort that was waiting in "No Man's Land." By this time enemy artillery fire was pouring down on the lines, and the escort and its prisoners had to run the gauntlet of the bursting shells. Unfortunately a large calibre high-explosive projectile "bore their number." It burst in the midst of the party, and neither escort nor prisoners were seen again. All were literally blown into shreds.

Meanwhile Sergt. Elliot and his men had proceeded forward and had met the party which had attacked on the left. Both parties now commenced the withdrawal, moving swiftly back down the enemy trenches. Suddenly, as Sergt. Elliot's party passed a dugout which had already been bombed, two bombs were thrown from it by Germans who had been lurking in its dark recess, killing the N. C. O. and Pte. Cullen. Of this party only Ptes. Bruce and Painter now remained and, as their bombs were all expended, they decided to make a dash down the line and get away. Pte. Bruce made for the right trench leading to "No Man's Land," and never reported back, while Pte. Painter lay in the enemy lines all night. At sunrise he worked his way through into "No Man's Land," and hid in a shell hole all day, regaining the Battalion lines after darkness had fallen.

While the party on the right had been meeting with such adverse fortune, that on the left, under Lieut. W. R. Barnes, had been more successful. Immediately after the northward block had been established the Germans attempted to rush the blocking party. They were met by rifle fire, and driven back with losses, one of

them being killed. Moving southward through the battered German lines, and bombing the dugouts as they went, the raiding party took two prisoners. These were immediately sent back under escort. The errand of exploration was then continued, but the trenches and dugouts were so battered that it was impossible to recognize the positions. Little excitement was encountered, and the men eventually retired in good order, in spite of efforts of the enemy to bomb them from his support positions.

On the whole, the raid was a success, and gained the praise of both Brigade and Divisional Headquarters. It had fulfilled its major purpose by the capture of the two prisoners, and had thereby rendered possible the identification of opposing enemy units on the eve of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. In addition it had inflicted further casualties on the enemy and had caused much damage to his positions. On the other hand the Canadian casualties had numbered twenty. Six were killed or missing, including Lieut. Appleby, and fourteen were wounded, most of them only slightly.

During the remaining days of the month the rain poured down incessantly, reducing the trenches to liquid mud. The artillery maintained a constant and heavy fire on the enemy positions, to which there was little retaliation. On the night of March 30th the 31st Battalion went into support, being relieved in the line by the 28th Battalion.

VI.

The first week of April—a week of rain and snow and dismal cloud-veiled skies—was active with the final preparations for the opening of the spring offensive. In the forward areas men slipped and floundered in the mud-clogged trenches, where parapets were collapsing and water had gathered knee deep. On the muddy roads of the rearward areas, congested with marching troops, men and horses struggled with mired transports and limbers, to the accompaniment of sulphurous invective, as munitions and supplies moved forward and guns were manoeuvred into position. Further back still, in the training areas, units relieved from the line worked hard at putting the final touches to their preparations for the attack.

Hour by hour and day by day the artillery pounded the enemy positions with high-explosive shells, blowing in dugouts, levelling

trenches and ploughing up the ground. On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th the bombardment was particularly heavy as the artillery put down practice barrages over the German lines.

On April 2nd, company officers and N.C.O.'s went forward to reconnoitre the jumping-off points of the 31st Battalion and to locate Lewis-gun positions and regimental aid posts. Two days later the 4th Brigade relieved the 6th Brigade in support, and the 31st Battalion, with its sister units, marched out to tent and trench bivouac near the village of Maisnil-Bouche. Here Major E. S. Doughty rejoined the Battalion from a special course of instruction in England.

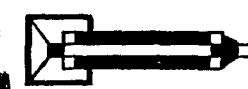
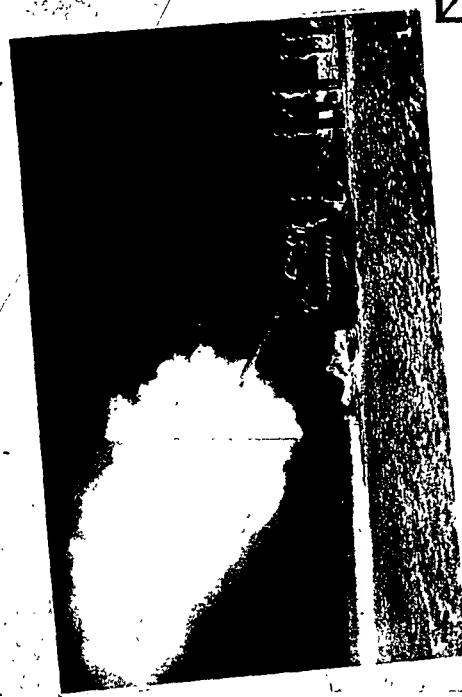
While in relief the rain and mud made training difficult, but what could be done in this direction was accomplished during the days of April 6th and 7th. The attack, which had originally been planned for April 8th, was postponed, and on the evening of the 7th the 31st Battalion received orders to remain in the training area for a further twelve hours.

Promptly at 6.45 a.m. on April 8th the men of Alberta left Maisnil-Bouche and marched by companies to Assiniboine Camp, Bois des Alleux, which was reached in two hours. Here the troops bivouacked without shelter of any kind upon ground a foot or so deep in mud. Luckily, for the first time in weeks, the weather was fine, and this somewhat mitigated the discomfort of the situation. While in bivouac the final preparations for the attack were completed. Stores, bombs, reserve ammunition and tools were issued to the companies, and both Divisional and Brigade Commanders visited and addressed the men. It being Easter Sunday, a service was held in the afternoon, Capt. E. Appleyard officiating, and later the band played a number of selections to the men. At 9.15 p.m. the Battalion marched out for its assembly positions in front of Thelus Village.

The move forward was slow and tedious. The roads were congested with long columns of troops on the march, and the deep mud made the going heavy. The enemy, moreover, fully aware of the concentration of troops on his front, shelled the roads heavily. Near Aux Reitz the marching battalions were caught in the barrage, and many casualties resulted. The 31st Battalion was successful, however, in slipping through, and reached its assembly

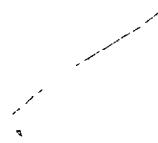
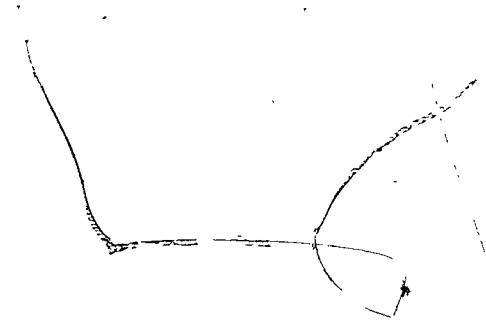
positions without casualties. At 3.25 a.m., on April 9th, all the companies were in position and ready for attack.

The front-line strength of the Alberta unit was 638 rifles under the command of 22 officers. One platoon of each company, and a certain percentage of headquarters details and specialists, had been left behind in tents vacated by the 28th Battalion to form a nucleus for the Regiment after the action. The main body, trained and ready, awaited the dawn.



Scenes, Vimy Ridge, April, 1917.

1 Naval gun, night firing 3 Remains of village, 1917
2 Over the top with the tanks. 4 Tanks on the move



CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge

I.

At this point, while the troops are awaiting the onslaught at Vimy Ridge, a brief digression is desirable to review the general situation on the Western Front and to describe the character of the positions which were to be attacked.

In the sphere of world events a good deal had happened since the autumn of the previous year. In January Germany had commenced her unrestricted submarine campaign against England, sinking on sight all ships — British or neutral — bound for a British port. This action by Berlin caused the United States to sever diplomatic relations with Germany. Nine weeks later, on April 6th, 1917, after having suffered for over two years insult and injury (including the promiscuous murder at sea of her citizens) the United States declared war on Germany.

On March 15th Czar Nicholas II. of Russia was compelled to abdicate. His people were in open revolution, and his armies on the Eastern Front were flocking back into Russia. As a fighting force on the side of the Allies, the Eastern Power ceased to exist from this date.

The defection of Russia, coupled with the overwhelming of Rumania and the capture of Bucharest by the Germans and Austrians, was a serious blow to the Allies in the west. Coming prior to the intervention of the United States, and long before that nation was in a position to be of any assistance, it released hundreds of thousands of troops, vast numbers of guns of all calibres, many aircraft and war material in great quantities to strengthen the armies of the Central Powers on the Western Front. This accession of strength was most opportune for the enemy, as it

occurred at a time when the enormously increased fighting power of the British Empire was threatening an early decision.

From another theatre of war, however, came news of a more cheerful nature. The forces under General Maude had scored decisive successes over the Turks, and had captured Bagdad.

Meanwhile in the sphere of politics the Asquith administration in England had given way to a new Coalition Government under Lloyd George. This dynamic but somewhat erratic political figure had already infused great energy into the new Ministry of Munitions, which had by this time entirely transformed the situation in the west in respect to shells and guns. As Prime Minister he brought the same qualities of restless vitality to bear, and in piloting his country through the critical war years of 1917 and 1918, he undoubtedly attained the highest achievement of his career.

In America, Woodrow Wilson had been returned to power as President of the United States on the platform of his pacifism and his celebrated "Too proud to fight" policy.

During December Germany, realizing the imposing nature of her territorial gains and commencing to feel the effects of the blockade by the British Navy, put out feelers in the direction of a negotiated peace. As her overtures, however, were based more or less on the war map as it then existed, her suggestions received but scant consideration. So far as Britain was concerned no peace could be contemplated save that dictated to a definitely defeated enemy.

II.

On the Western Front, following the capture by the 4th Canadian Division of the Regina positions, a general withdrawal of the German lines in the area had commenced, and had proceeded methodically throughout the winter. Village after village was evacuated and position after position abandoned. Warlencourt, Pys, Irles, Miraumont, Beauregard and Serre, together with many smaller hamlets, fell into British hands.

This retreat somewhat puzzled the Allied High Command, and led to a readjustment of its forces, the British taking over additional frontage from the French. Later, the retirement was con-

tinued. The Germans were shortening and straightening their line, and falling back on the strong Siegfried or Hindenburg positions.

As they retired the enemy destroyed everything behind them. Roads were smashed up, or planted with concealed contact mines. Bridges were demolished, houses and whole villages were razed to the ground and fields and orchards were destroyed. Behind the retreating hordes only a wide desolation was left across which the pursuing British and French armies could move but slowly, engaged continually in stubborn fighting with the rearguards of the retreating Germans. By the end of March the fluid line of the German Army had commenced to crystallize on its new and powerfully entrenched positions. Here, holding a shortened line, the enemy stayed his retreat, and was once more in a position to build up strong reserves — reserves which were soon to be further strengthened by reinforcements released from the Eastern Front.

In the new alignment of the opposing forces, Vimy Ridge formed a key position. The country in this area was of vital importance to France on account of its mines and industrial activities, the coal fields stretching from Lens to La Bassee. The Germans had a firm grip on Lille, and by their occupation of the Ridge held observation of the whole of the coal producing area which still remained in Allied occupation.

The country throughout this area is dotted with slag heaps and laced with railway tracks serving the mines. With the exception of Vimy Ridge itself the terrain is flat. This ridge, which is some four miles in length, runs roughly north and south and, although only four hundred feet above sea level, dominates wide stretches of low lying country in every direction. To the northeast of the high ground lies the mining town of Lens, and to the south the land falls away to the valley of the River Scarpe, beyond which lies Arras. The main road from Arras to Lens runs northward right across the centre of the upland. On either side of this road rise the two dominating heights of the ridge—Hills 145 and 140.

In the early spring of 1917, Lens lay about two and a half miles behind the German line and Arras close in front of it. The whole of the ridge itself was in German possession, the hostile

batteries, safely hidden behind the crest of the hill, commanding the British lines and rearward areas. Not a move could be made in daylight without the knowledge of enemy observers.

The Germans fully appreciated the tactical importance of the elevation, and had fortified it strongly. It was covered with a maze of trenches which converged on numerous strong points, and was dotted with machine-gun posts, many of them protected by concrete emplacements. The trench system was supplemented by numerous deep dugouts and long tunnels for the protection of infantry from artillery bombardments. On the forward slopes were the usual front and support lines connected by communication trenches. Behind the support trenches ran "Zwischen Stellung" at varying depths of from 500 to 1000 yards, with communication lines running in all directions. Beyond the crest lay a number of broken trench lines none of which, however, were of continuous length. In short a position of greater strength, or one more replete with defensive works, would be hard to imagine; and the apparent indifference of the enemy to the British preparations which preceded the attack is an indication of his faith in the inviolability of this sector of his front.

The strength of the German defences in this area was not confined, however, to the entrenched positions on the forward slopes and crest of the ridge itself. Behind the rearward slopes and running parallel to the Arras-Lens Road, was the strong Thelus—Vimy—Lens line. This line was constructed to protect the villages of Vimy and Thelus. The latter place was also strongly fortified, as were also the Ecole Commune and La Folie Farm on the summit of the ridge itself.

About four miles to the rear of the Vimy Heights ran another defensive line known as the Oppy-Mericourt system. This line swung in a curve northward to Avion, where it made junction with the Lens defences. Yet further to the rear the enemy was already engaged upon the construction of the afterwards famous Drocourt-Queant Switch, midway between Arras and Douai. All these positions were destined to be captured eventually by the Canadians.

III.

The Canadian operations at Vimy Ridge must not be regarded as an isolated effort but as an integral part of a strategic scheme forced upon the British by events at other points of the front. When General Nivelle superseded General Joffre, the whole of Sir Douglas Haig's plans for the campaign of the summer of 1917 had to be redrafted. The latter had contemplated continuing his thrust against the Germans in front of Arras as a logical sequel to the Somme offensive. Now, however, the new French Generalissimo requested an extension of the British line to the south of the Somme. The resulting diversion of troops required to take over the extended frontage necessitated the drastic amendment of the well-conceived operations against the Arras-Serre Salient and the subsequent offensive in Flanders.

The mutiny of the French divisions which occurred at about this time necessitated a further revision of British battle plans. In order to keep the enemy engaged, to pin down his increasing reserves, and thus prevent him from striking at the weakened French line to the south, Sir Douglas Haig was compelled to keep hammering away in front of Arras. Until well into May the fighting continued, division after division of British troops being thrown ruthlessly into the fray. The price of French disaffection on French soil was paid in British blood.

The operations on the Arras front commenced on April 9th. The First British Army, with the Canadian Corps on its extreme right, formed a defensive flank for the main advance of the Third Army in front of Arras. The Vimy Ridge positions menaced this main advance. It was essential, therefore, that the enemy should be cleared from the ridge, which would then form the pivot of the whole British advance on the right. The vital and difficult task of capturing the heights was entrusted to the Canadian Corps, and the results fully justified the confidence placed by the British Higher Command in the troops of the Dominion.

The work assigned to the Canadian Corps involved the capture of the enemy positions on the forward slopes, summit and reserve slopes of the ridge along a frontage of about 7,000 yards. All four divisions were to take part in the attack, with the 1st Division on the right and then the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Divisions in order from

south to north. The conformation of the ridge in relation to the British front was such that the units of the 1st and 2nd Divisions on the south would have the greatest distances to cover before they reached the eastern slopes. This rendered the intricacy of the attack greater than it would otherwise have been, but repeated practice had made every battalion thoroughly familiar with the role it was to play. The area to be attacked was divided into successive objectives known by distinctive colours, and each objective was allotted to a specified body of troops. The battle plans provided that each wave of the attack should capture its specified objective and consolidate while fresh troops passed through them behind the creeping barrage to capture in turn their objective further on. Thus, like a rising tide, every wave would pass over and beyond that in front of it, in the manner known as "leap frogging."

The front lines of the enemy were to be smashed out of existence by a massed artillery bombardment. At an average distance of some 800 yards to the rear of this first line of defense was the line known as the "Black Line." It ran, on the front of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions, along the Zwolfer Weg and Zwischen Stellung, reached the crest of the ridge on the 3rd Division frontage and cut across Hill 145 on that of the 4th Division. This "Black Line" was the first objective of the Canadian Corps. The second objective, known as the "Red Line," was 500 yards or more further on. Upon the front of the two right divisions, this line ran before the village of Thelus. From there northward it followed the ravine of the Bois de Bonval on the right flank of the 3rd Division and continued along the eastern slopes of the ridge above the village of Givenchy. This line formed the final objective of the 3rd and 4th Divisions, but on the right the 1st and 2nd Divisions had still a third and fourth objective to capture. These were known as the "Blue" and "Brown Lines" respectively. The former, located about 1,000 yards beyond the "Red Line," lay beyond the strongly fortified village of Thelus, while the latter ran through Farbus Wood and the Bois de Ville, and included the vital German gun positions.

The planned advance of the 1st Division was over two miles in depth on a frontage at the start of 1,900 yards. This frontage

narrowed down at the "Brown Line" to 750 yards. It was dominated on the north by Hill 140 which, on the day of the attack, was to be blinded in smoke. The 2nd Division was to commence its attack on a frontage of 1,400 yards, which was to be enlarged at the end to cover about 2,300 yards. During its advance the divisional frontage was to swing until it faced northeast, thus linking the left of the 1st Division in the "Brown Line" with the right of the 3rd Division in the rearward "Red Line." In this difficult operation it was to be assisted by the 13th Brigade of the 5th British Division, which had been lent to the Canadian Corps for this purpose.

Two commanding positions on the ridge were expected to give considerable trouble to the 2nd Division. These were Thelus Village and Hill 140. The strong trench line of Thelus-Vimy had been under heavy shell fire from the Canadian artillery for some time past, and in the attack eight tanks were to co-operate with the Division to subdue machine-gun nests and break down the wire protecting enemy artillery positions.

On the north the 3rd Canadian Division had the long Schwaben Tunnel to deal with and the strongly fortified positions of La Folie Farm and the Ecole Commune.

On the extreme left of the Canadian line the 4th Division, with a frontage of 2,000 yards, had the double task of taking the second of the commanding eminences of the ridge, Hill 145, and of protecting the left flank of the advance. Hill 145 was defended by a strong trench system and bristled with machine guns, while another small knoll, known as "The Pimple" was able to enfilade the advance of the attacking troops.

To assist the units of the flanking Division, these menacing positions were to be subjected to a heavy preliminary artillery bombardment and deluged, as the attacking waves approached, with gas and smoke. Thus aided, it was hoped that the 4th Division might be successful in getting through to its objectives. It was; but the task was very severe and costly.

The plans of the supporting artillery were no less elaborate or minutely detailed than those of the infantry. A heavy concentration of guns and munitions had been assembled, and every battery had its definite targets at definite times. The 18-pounders,

of which, on an average, there was one for every 30 yards of frontage, were to provide a rolling barrage for the infantry. Other batteries of 18-pounders and 4.7's were to rest their barrages on definite trench objectives 200 yards or so in front of the rolling barrage, until the latter reached them, when they would lift their fire to a further line of trenches. Beyond these barrages the heavy artillery was to put down two lines of high explosive shells to smash up redoubts and machine-gun positions.

After passing the "Blue Line" the attacking waves of infantry on the right would be beyond the range of the 18-pounder batteries in the gun positions to the rear of the original Canadian infantry lines. To overcome this difficulty silent batteries were placed within a hundred yards of the front line. These were ordered not to open fire until the 1st and 6th Brigades advanced to the attack. Later on, these silent batteries were destined to make things somewhat unpleasant for the 31st Battalion.

IV.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge commenced before dawn on the morning of April 9th, when the British and Canadian artillery crashed into action all along the line in a general bombardment of great intensity. A graphic description of this terrific cannonade has been drawn by Sir W. Beach Thomas, who writes, in part, as follows:

"Then the fitful flashes were concentrated into an ocean of lightning which broke into one continuous wave above us along the jagged line of batteries. Here and there great Mines arose in ponderous upheavals of blackness, glowing red at the centre. Clouds of golden rain were fired as signals all along the lines. The enemy fired his frantic 'S. O. S.' from every quarter. Star shells of every hue, flashes of guns, bursts of shell and shrapnel — this medley of fireworks filled the earth and air with such intermingled fires that no distinction was perceptible till some particular explosion happened to reflect the wall of a ruin or give background to a tree. The noise, which quite dazed some observers, was forgotten, clean drowned in the light."

In reply to the British guns, the German artillery brought down a barrage of shells of all calibres on the opposing front-line

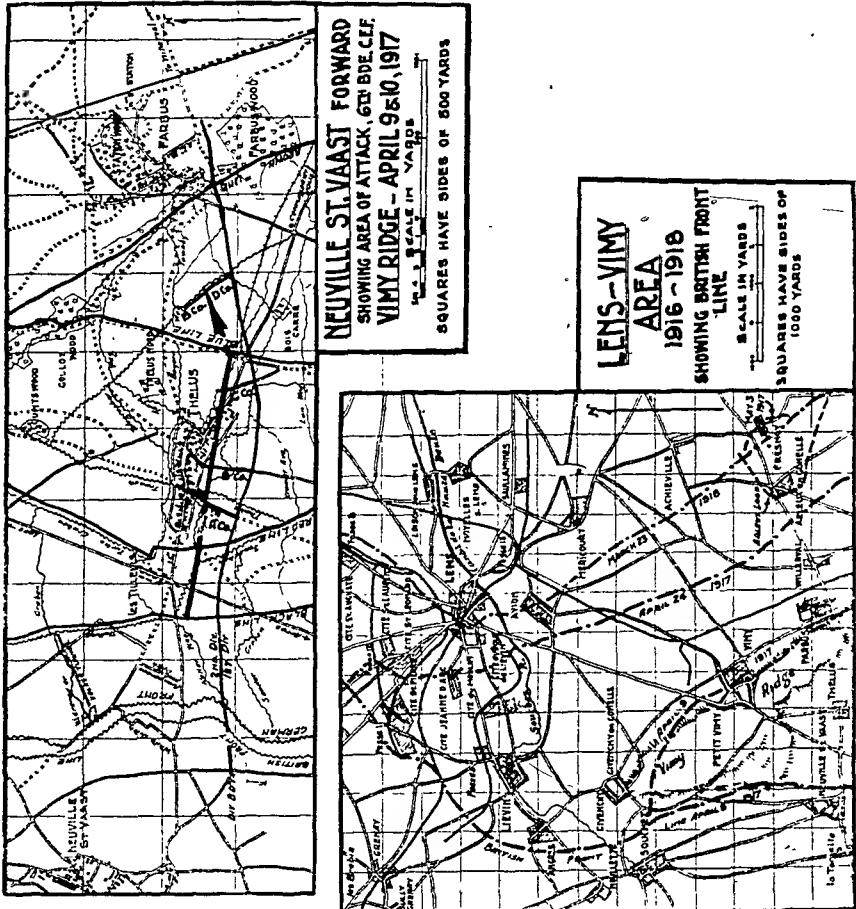
positions and a scattered fire over both communication and support trenches. Accompanied thus by the twinkling flashes of thousands of guns and the red eruptions of bursting shells came the dull and cloudy dawning of the fateful day.

Promptly at zero hour, 5:30 a.m., the guns providing the infantry barrage came into action. At 6:00 a.m. the clouds broke into alternate rain and snow, which increased in severity as time went on. On this occasion the whirling snow slurries proved an ally to the attacking troops, as they were blowing straight into the face of the enemy compelling both artillery and machine guns to fire blindly and with less effect than would otherwise have been the case. In many places the Canadian troops were within ten yards of the enemy trenches before they were perceived, and bayonets and Lewis guns settled the issue.

The movement of the 2nd Division against Thelus Village and Hill 140 commenced with the advance of the 4th and 5th Brigades. Two battalions of each brigade, the 18th, 19th, 24th and 26th, went forward first to attack and consolidate the "Black Line." Close behind these four battalions a third unit of each brigade, the 21st and 25th Battalions, followed to assault the "Red Line." The 20th and 22nd Battalions, acting as reserves for the 4th and 5th Brigades respectively, did the work of mopping up.

At 6:40 a.m., the tanks were ordered forward, to the number of six. They did not prove of any great assistance, and were out of action before the "Black Line" was reached. Their crews, however, were determined not to share a similar fate. They removed the machine guns from the tanks and went on with the infantry. About this time the first German prisoners began to trickle back. Few had any fight left in them and many were in a state of collapse that testified to the severity of the British artillery fire.

Most of the "Black Line" on the 2nd Division frontage was captured by 6:20 a.m., and an hour later the "Red Line" was in Canadian hands. Severe shelling, and strong enemy resistance from Balloon Trench, had temporarily checked the advance of the 19th Battalion, and had caused heavy casualties before a determined bayonet charge carried the position. On the front of the 5th Brigade serious opposition developed around the "Dump," just in



front of the "Red Line"; but here also the bayonet eventually carried the attack home and over 250 prisoners were taken.

By this time the 18th, 19th, 24th and 26th Battalions, in the order named from south to north, had occupied and were consolidating their positions in the "Black Line." In the "Red Line" the 21st Battalion on the right and the 25th on the left had captured their objectives. Then came a pause in the advance, while the artillery brought down a prolonged barrage upon the ground immediately in front of the "Red Line" in order to prepare the way for the next stage of the attack. This was to consist of the advance of the 31st, 28th and 29th Battalions, with two battalions of the 13th British Infantry Brigade on their left, to the "Blue Line."

These five units had commenced, in the meantime, their forward movement. At 7:20 a.m. Headquarters of the 31st Battalion moved up between C and D Companies to Mercier Trench, from which position it was possible to view the whole of the Battalion area.

Before commencing the advance the companies of the 31st Battalion had been organized from front to rear in the order in which they were to make the attack. As the men moved forward from the assembly trenches the ground was being subjected to a heavy shelling. Owing to the "Artillery formation" adopted by the Battalion during its approach, the casualties inflicted were not heavy.

The rain, broken by sudden snow flurries, was falling more heavily by this time. The ground over which the advance had been made was thickly pitted with shell holes, littered with the tangled remnants of wire and crossed by innumerable half-obliterated trenches. Under the rain the churned-up earth was rapidly turning into slippery mud which clung to the boots of the marching men and made the going difficult. In spite of these obstacles, however, and of the snow which was at times almost blinding, the Battalion advanced steadily without loss of touch or formation, with A Company leading, followed by B, C and D Companies in the order named at about 50-yard intervals.

At 9:00 a.m., A and B Companies reached their first position in the "Red Line," just in front of the Lens-Arras Road. Here

they passed through the 21st Battalion, which was busily engaged in consolidating its newly won positions. About 100 yards in front of this line a halt was made to await the lifting of the barrage.

Battalion Headquarters again moved forward and, finding no convenient dugout, located itself in a large shell hole just beyond the road. At this time the enemy artillery was less active; but an occasional shell from the supporting barrage, which was resting upon the western edge of Thelus, fell short and caused trouble for the men in the advanced A and B Companies.

At 9.10 a.m., the officer in command of the leading company of the 28th Battalion, operating on the left of the 31st, reported that all his men were in position. At the same time the rolling barrage lifted, and the men of both units moved forward. As the advance continued the barrage increased in intensity; and, some sixty yards behind the slowly creeping line of bursting shells and upflung earth, partially masked in the smoke and the flying debris, the men of the Iron Sixth went steadily forward. At 9:25 a.m. the "silent batteries" in the advance gun positions, to which reference has already been made, came into action. These batteries, throwing their shells some 75 yards short of the line the barrage had been resting on, inflicted casualties on the leading companies of the 31st Battalion, which were forced to retire for a distance of 100 yards.

Ten minutes later the barrage again lifted, and once more the five attacking battalions moved forward towards their objectives. By this time the men of the two leading companies of the 31st Battalion had almost reached the outskirts of Thelus, and the enemy resistance was stiffening with every yard gained. Hostile artillery fire had decreased in violence, the enemy gunners being busily engaged, by this time, in withdrawing their threatened batteries beyond the reach of the rapid Canadian advance; but machine-gun and rifle fire intensified as the attacking troops moved forward, and stubbornly disputed every foot of the ground gained.

By 10 o'clock, the western part of the village of Thelus had been captured by A Company of the 31st Battalion. While the men of this company were "mopping up" the territory gained, B Company passed through and went on to capture and "mop up" the

centre section. By 10:20 a.m., this work had been completed, and 35 prisoners sent back. Twenty minutes later, in spite of a sudden burst of intensive hostile gun fire which swept the village, C Company of the 31st Battalion, assisted by C Company of the 28th Battalion, had driven the enemy out of the eastern end of Thelus, the whole of which to the south of Les Tilleuls Road was by this time in the hands of the Alberta unit. North of the road the village had been occupied and "mopped up" by the men of the 28th Battalion.

An incident which indicates the absolute confidence of the enemy in the security of his positions on Vimy Ridge occurred as the 31st Battalion approached its final objective. In the vicinity of the "Blue Line" a large dugout was captured which contained a fully equipped officers' bar. There were five uniformed waiters on duty when the unexpected advent of the men of the 31st occurred, and the table was laid in readiness for a meal. The refreshments were thoroughly enjoyed although not by those for whom they were prepared, and noble thirsts were nobly quenched in beverages which were certainly not intended for Canadian palates. The waiters were taken prisoners.

At about 11:10 a.m. D Company moved forward to its assigned position in the "Blue Line" and a little later B Company moved up on its left from Thelus. Scattered firing indicated that the enemy resistance was still being beaten down. The 31st Battalion, and the 28th Battalion on its left, had gained their objectives promptly on time.

The whole advance had been carried out with clock-like precision. There had been no confusion, no loss of formation, no failure of contact and no delay. Enemy resistance, which in the village of Thelus had been stubborn, had been overcome methodically with bomb, bayonet and Lewis gun. The whole operation was as perfect an example of organization and co-operation between infantry and artillery as any seen during the war.

Hardly had the men of the Alberta unit taken up position in the "Blue Line," when the 27th Battalion went through to continue the advance of the 6th Brigade to the "Brown Line" running along the Bois de la Ville. B and D Companies of the 31st Battalion then moved forward and consolidated the line just west of the Point Du

Jour-Farbus line. D Company furnished one platoon to form a strong point at position "U," and A Company took up its position in support along the sunken road from Thermos Trench. C Company was formed into battalion reserve in the same place.

By early afternoon Battalion Headquarters and a regimental aid post had been established in a dugout near the junction of Tape and Zwischen Stellung, and the Scout Officer had located an advance report centre from which communication with Headquarters was inaugurated, at first by visual signals and later by wire.

During the afternoon and evening rain and snow continued to fall, and the enemy artillery maintained a somewhat sporadic bombardment of the new positions occupied by the Canadian forces. As night closed down the enemy attempted a counter-attack on the 6th Brigade front. The massing of troops was observed, and word was sent back to the artillery, which promptly brought to bear a barrage and stamped out the effort before it could be launched.

Thus ended, for the 31st Battalion, the first day's fighting in the great Vimy operations. The arduous preparation of the preceding weeks had been crowned with complete success. All objectives had been reached and held, much war material had been taken and many prisoners had been captured. In relation to the results achieved, the cost in casualties had been small. Early in the advance, Lieut. D. B. Forbes had been killed by a shell-burst while leading his men, and a little later, Lieut. W. A. McGregor had been seriously wounded. Three other officers, Lieuts. W. R. Barnes, B. Brown and D. Kennedy, were slightly wounded, but remained on duty with the Battalion. Some 14 other ranks were killed, 65 wounded and 6 were missing, the total casualties being 90 of all ranks. The officers cadre was brought up to strength next day when Lieuts. W. Langtry, R. J. Forbes and P. Kingsmith joined the unit.

The total casualties of the whole Brigade during the day's operations amounted to only 527 of all ranks, made up as follows:

Officers — 6 killed and 17 wounded.

Other Ranks — 84 killed and 420 wounded or missing.

V.

Meanwhile on the right of the advance of the 4th and 6th Brigades the veterans of the 1st Canadian Division had gone forward with equal precision and success, and had attained all their objectives. Their advance had carried them as far as the western edge of Farbus Wood, while outposts had moved forward to the railway and had taken up positions for the night. Detachments of the Canadian Light Horse had patrolled forward as far as the village of Willerval, at which point they were met by machine-gun fire from the house tops and forced to retire. At the end of the day the senior division had penetrated the enemy positions to a depth of over two miles, had captured a number of guns, much war material and about 1,300 prisoners.

The 5th Brigade, on the left of the 2nd Division frontage, gained its objectives, but met with some unforeseen trouble in doing so. On its front was the Volker Tunnel, a long subterranean gallery too deep to be damaged by the British artillery and packed with German troops armed with many machine guns. After the first waves of the attack had passed, these troops emerged and assailed the lines of advancing men from the rear. In spite of this unexpected attack, the men of the 24th and 26th Battalions went on to secure their objectives in the "Black Line." They then turned about and attacked their attackers. Taken front and rear the Germans, who at first showed dauntless courage and put up a magnificent fight, were forced to surrender. The garrison of this tunnel had left the place mined. Happily the victors detected the trap in time and, cutting the leads, secured an enormous shelter and place of concentration for further operations.

On the left of the 2nd Division the 3rd Division moved through to their objectives on schedule, but suffered heavily from German machine gunners posted on Hill 145. This hill was on the 4th Division frontage, and this Division had found it impossible to maintain line with the division on its right. As a result the machine gunners, from their vantage point on higher ground, were able to infilade the ranks of the 7th Brigade as it advanced, and forced a defensive flank to be thrown out to the north to cover the attack. By the end of the day, however, the 3rd Division had not only occupied all its allotted positions in the "Red Line," but

had pushed on through the Bois de la Folie woods towards the Vimy-Angres line.

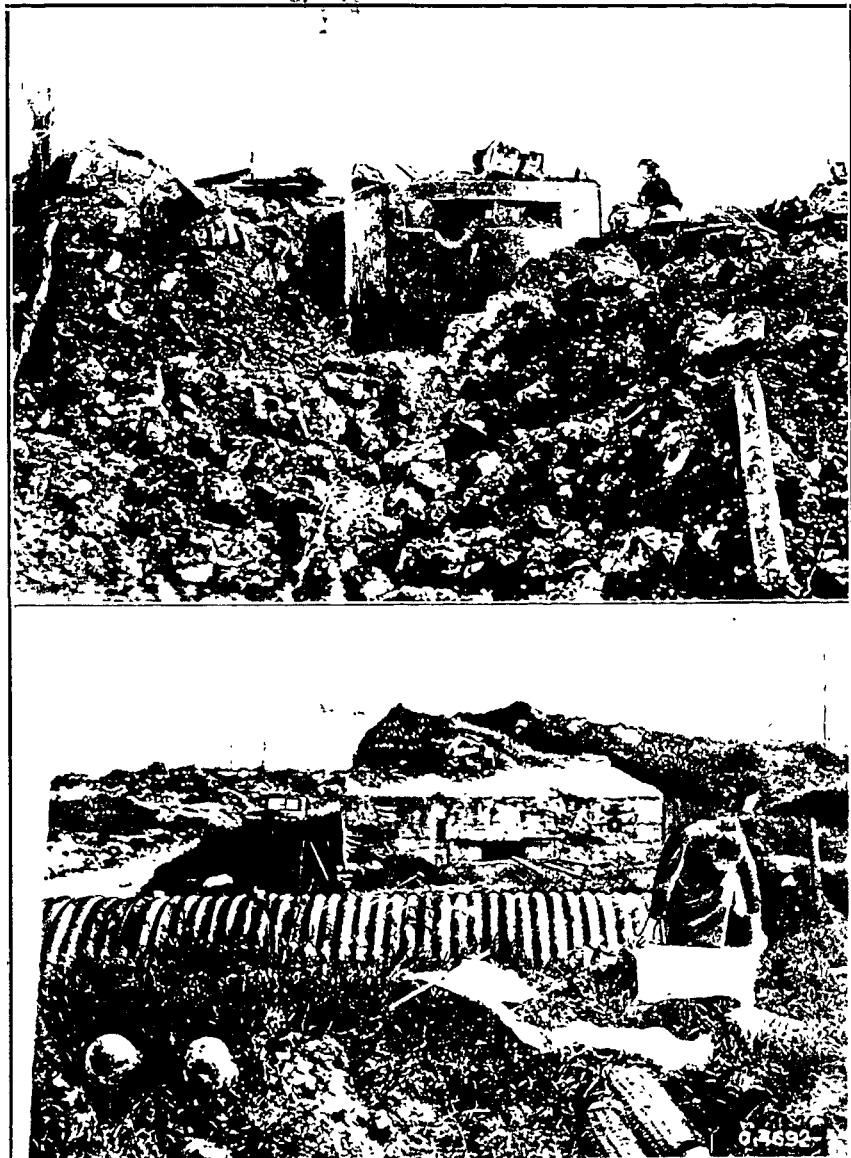
On the extreme left of the Canadian line the 4th Division had launched its attack on the northern extremity of Vimy Ridge. It met with stubborn resistance, particularly at Hill 145 and at another strongly fortified eminence known as "The Pimple," garrisoned by troops of the Prussian Guard. These two strongholds repulsed all attacks throughout April 9th, and were only subdued in the early hours of the following morning. On April 10th, however, both positions were captured, and the entire objective of the Division achieved.

The capture of Vimy Ridge gave a greatly enhanced lustre to the reputation of the Canadian Corps. In a single day's fighting one of the strongest points on the enemy front had been captured, and his lines driven in to an average depth of about 2,500 yards along a front of nearly 4 miles. The village of Thelus had been taken, and the Canadian line had been pushed forward to the outskirts of Farbus and to within a few hundred yards of Vimy.

VI.

All next day, April 10th, snow fell almost continuously. German long-range guns shelled the front-line positions of the Canadian Corps intermittently, doing some damage and causing some casualties. For a time it appeared as though the enemy contemplated a counter-attack in force, but a heavy barrage was brought to bear on his positions and the threatened attack did not materialize.

Shortly after noon C Company, acting on orders from Brigade Headquarters, was despatched to reinforce the 27th Battalion in the "Brown Line." During the afternoon the 3rd Division continued its assault upon the village of Vimy, while the 27th and 29th Battalions of the 2nd Division attempted to go forward to the railway at Farbus, but were driven back. The 31st Battalion remained in position, awaiting orders. Late that night the 1st and 4th Canadian Infantry Brigades relieved the 6th Brigade, and the latter went out to billets in reserve in the neighbourhood of Zivy Cave.



Top: German machine-gun emplacement--Thelus Village
Bottom: German machine-gun post and underground passage at Neuville Vitasse,
now a French family's home.



The cold, damp weather continued while the Battalion rested in dugouts and shelters. The mud, and the smashed and blasted ground of the ridge, made the forward movement of the guns and their shells a slow and difficult process. A light railway had been extended forward; however, over the captured territory, and progress was being made.

On the night of April 11th, in heavy snow, the 31st Battalion moved from its trench billets to hutments near Mont St. Eloy. The march was exceedingly uncomfortable, the mud on the roads being almost knee deep and the roads themselves congested with transport and troops on the march. The huts allotted to the unit were dry and comfortable, however, and the men appreciated the unusual luxury of a night's rest between blankets.

On the morning of April 13th, orders were received to the effect that the 6th Brigade would relieve the 4th Brigade on the following night, and would make an attack, on the morning of the 16th, on the enemy north-east of Thelus with the object of capturing the Vimy-Arras railway. The afternoon of the 13th was spent in general organization and in preparing for the proposed operation. Early in the evening, however, word was received that the enemy had fallen back, evacuating Angres, Vimy, Willerval and Bailleul, and had abandoned, in so doing, the line of the railway. Cancellation of orders for the attack immediately followed, and the Brigade was sent forward to repair the badly shattered roads in order to make passage for the guns. On the same day the whole of the Canadian Corps moved forward in the wake of the retiring Germans, the advance continuing during the following day.

The enemy had now fallen back upon his next defensive positions—the Oppy-Mericourt line. These positions were well entrenched, heavily wired and strongly defended, and upon them the enemy halted and prepared to give battle to the advancing armies of Canada and Britain. Thus, by the evening of April 14th, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and the subsequent retirement forced upon the enemy, came to an end. The total advance had gained ground to an average depth of nearly four miles on a frontage of about three and a half miles. In all, over 4,000 prisoners had been taken and 40 guns of all calibres, together with many machine

guns and great supplies of ammunition and other war material, had been captured. In addition to this, heavy casualties had been inflicted upon the enemy in killed and wounded, and a hard blow had been struck at his morale and confidence.

VII.

It was still raining hard when, on April 14th, all four battalions of the 6th Brigade moved forward to commence the work of road mending. Throughout the day the men of the 31st Battalion laboured hard in the neighbourhood of Vimy Village at filling shell holes and putting the road into as good a condition as circumstances permitted. This work cost the unit seven casualties by hostile gun fire, one in A Company killed and six wounded in B Company. During the day notice was received that the Alberta unit would relieve the 26th Battalion in the line in front of Vimy on the night of the 15th. Preparations for the forward move were immediately commenced, bombs, wire and ammunition being drawn and other details attended to.

The eastward slopes of Vimy Ridge, being under enemy observation during daylight and open to his artillery fire, the companies of the 31st Battalion moved up into position independently under cover of darkness and in drenching rain. It was nearly midnight before the relief was completed. Battle patrols were immediately sent forward to gain what information was possible of the opposing lines. They found the enemy strongly entrenched in positions well covered with wire, with sentries on the alert and ready to fire at the least provocation.

The morning of April 16th broke in heavy rain. In the growing light of the dawning Col. Bell, the Battalion Commander, made his rounds of the trenches. By the time he had completed his inspection of B Company daylight had penetrated the cloud-veiled skies. He was about to move on when the crack of a single rifle shot and the "ping" of a bullet uncomfortably near the Commanding Officer suggested that an enemy sniper had been following his movements. At that time little was known of the enemy's positions, and nothing at all of the locations of his rifle pits. The Battalion Scouts, however, watching closely, discerned a movement in a rifle pit some 500 yards to the Battalion front. Lieut. Curtis, the Scout Officer, volunteered to round up the sniper. He took with him

Scout Sparrow and Sergt. Bennett and moved off to the left on his dangerous errand. Col. Bell instructed the men of B Company to keep up steady rifle fire on the sniper's pit, thereby forcing the occupant to remain in cover. Suddenly Lieut. Curtis and his men made a rush for the pit and were successful in capturing the sniper, together with an officer who was with him. These were brought back to the Battalion lines in broad daylight. This, in conjunction with lack of knowledge as to the enemy positions, made the adventure an exceedingly hazardous one. Lieut. Curtis was rewarded for his achievement with a well merited Military Cross, and both Sergt. Bennett and Scout Sparrow were awarded the Military Medal.

During the day the enemy maintained a steady artillery fire against the positions occupied by the Battalion. The embankment at the eastern end of Vimy Village, where Battalion Headquarters was established, came in for a particularly heavy shelling which was continued throughout the tour.

At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon orders were received for the 31st Battalion to move over to the right and take up the sector being held by the 13th Battalion of the 1st Canadian Division. At the same time the 52nd Battalion of the 3rd Division was to take over the positions of the Alberta unit. The relief commenced as soon as night had fallen. It was still raining heavily and was very dark, the difficulties of a somewhat complicated movement being enhanced by these inclement conditions. It was 6:30 a.m. on April 17th before the relief was completed, the line consolidated and the Lewis guns mounted in position. In the darkness A Company had gone too far to the right. Contact was established, however, with the units on both flanks and the gap in the centre of the Battalion frontage was covered by B Company in support.

All that day and most of the night following, the men of the 31st Battalion laboured at the improvement and strengthening of the positions which they occupied. In addition to work on the trenches so that a secure and continuous front line might be established, three outposts, each of five rifle pits at ten-yard intervals, were constructed. It was 3.20 a.m. on April 18th before the men, exhausted by hard work, lack of sleep and exposure to the cold and the rain, were relieved by the 28th Battalion.

After resting as comfortably as circumstances permitted in old trenches and dugouts scattered along the railway track between Fabrus and Vimy, the Battalion was again relieved on April 19th, this time by the 29th Battalion. Under heavy shell fire, the companies moved into billets in the old German gun pits and shelters in Goulot Wood, where the accommodation was a great improvement upon that of the last few days. Upon the completion of the relief Major W. F. Seaton and Capt. H. Norris, D.S.O., were sent down to hospital suffering from the effects of the strain and exposure of the past week. A number of other ranks were also sent back for medical attention, suffering from the same cause.

Once more the Battalion moved. This time it was forward to take over the open trenches in the main resistance line. During the several movements of the unit between April 16th and 20th the casualties had crept up to 29, including 5 killed and one missing.

This tour of the Alberta Regiment in the forward area was very brief. On the night of April 21st the unit again left the line for a rest camp which had been established half a mile to the west of Aux Rietz, at which point tents had been erected to accomodate the whole Brigade.

While in rest numerous working parties were furnished by the Battalion. These were employed in excavating new gun emplacements and in establishing an artillery dump — activities which cost seven casualties — three killed and four wounded. During this period also 78 reinforcements, many of them wounded veterans of the Battalion, reported for duty and were taken on the strength of the several companies.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Fresnoy

I.

As the month of April drew to its close the weather became brighter and warmer. It seemed as though, at long last, the tardy spring had come to oust the rain-drowned lingering winter. With the sunshine, and the slow drying of the mud, the spirits of the shell-harrassed companies, working to make passage for the guns along the Lens-Arras Road, improved. The hardships and exposures of the past few weeks, however, had taken their toll of the 31st Battalion, over 100 members of the unit being in the Field Ambulance with illness of one kind or another.

During the last few days of the month, Capt. E. Appleyard and the Chaplain of the 27th Battalion had an unpleasant duty to perform in disposing of the unburied French and German dead which littered the slopes of Vimy. Some of these corpses had been lying on the ground for over a year, and the gruesome nature of the job can be better imagined than described.

While the 6th Brigade was still in support, and carrying on the work of road building under shell fire, the 1st Division launched an attack against Arleux in conjunction with an offensive by the XIII British Corps against Oppy. After extremely stubborn fighting, in which the advantage swayed first to one side and then to the other, both attacks were sucessful. By evening both Arleux-en-Gohelle and Oppy were in British hands.

The village of Arleux lies to the west and a little south of Fresnoy. The latter village was particularly well protected by the strong Oppy-Mericourt line. In front of the former ran the Arleux Loop, forming a sharp salient. With the capture of Arleux and Oppy the way was cleared for an attack on Fresnoy and the main German defensive positions.

In the meantime, after losing his key positions on Vimy Ridge, the enemy had been unable to resist the British thrusts to the north and south of the line of advance of the Canadian Corps. By the end of April his whole line had fallen back from south of Arras to north of Lens. On a front of some 15 miles as the crow flies the British forces had advanced to an average depth of about 4 miles, the new line running only one and a half miles from the heart of the important mining town of Lens.

A general attack by the British armies on this new German front from Arras northward was planned for May 3rd. The task allotted to the Canadian Corps in this attack was the capture of Fresnoy and the trenches to the north of this village up to the junction of the Arleux loop and the main Oppy-Mericourt system. Fresnoy itself lay at the end of a long valley, and its approaches were dominated by enemy artillery and machine guns to the north-east.

The task of capturing the strongly fortified village was entrusted to the 1st Canadian Division. To the north the 6th Brigade, with the 27th Battalion on the right and the 31st on the left, was allotted the attack upon the northern section of the Arleux Loop and the front-line and support position of the main Oppy-Mericourt system. Both attacks held promise of the utmost difficulty.

On the front of the 31st Battalion a new trench had been dug by the enemy from the Arleux Loop system roughly south-east by south for a distance of some 400 yards or so. This trench, which was known as the New German Trench, guarded the approach to the main Oppy-Mericourt line, and presented the first obstacle in the path of the men of Alberta.

Two days before the date fixed for the attack, Col. A. H. Bell, who had been acting as Brigadier, returned to take over command of the unit. On the previous night, Lieut. W. E. Curtis and two of his scouts (Sparrow and McNinch) had made a reconnaissance forward to learn what they could of the enemy positions and dispositions. Moving eastward along the Arleux Loop they found a block within a few yards of the enemy wire, which was all new and quite undamaged. They also ascertained that the new trench was wired along its entire length with concertina barbed wire, and that its front was protected by outposts.

On the morning of May 1st the french strength of the Battalion was 23 officers and 568 other ranks. Throughout that day, under intermittent shell fire, the men waited to move into their battle positions. At length, under cover of darkness, the Alberta unit proceeded up the line to take over the trenches from the 24th Battalion. Patrols were immediately sent forward to investigate the New German Trench. They were able to ascertain that this trench was strongly held.

Throughout the following day the German artillery shelled the area continually, honey-combing the whole vicinity with innumerable new craters, damaging the trenches and causing casualties. During the night the enemy showed signs of nervousness, and was very much on the alert. On two occasions the whole power of his artillery was turned on to the Canadian positions, a heavy barrage catching the 1st Canadian Brigade as it formed up for the attack. It was later learned that the enemy had a large concentration of troops in Fresnoy destined for a counter-attack; and, when the British barrage came down on the village at zero hour, these troops suffered severely.

During the night of May 2nd/3rd, the 31st Battalion disposed its companies in battle order. The front upon which the attack was to be made was narrow. C and D Companies were to lead the advance, each on a single-platoon frontage, with the other platoons following at 40-yard intervals. These two companies were to consolidate a front-line trench clear of the German lines on the reverse slope of the ridge, while D Company was ordered to locate Lewis guns to sweep the forward enemy positions. B Company was in support, with orders to move up on a two-platoon frontage at a distance of 75 yards to the rear of the attacking companies. The function of this company was to "mop up" and to cover any gaps which might occur between C and D Companies or on the flanks of the attacking platoons. A Company was ordered into battalion reserve, and was so disposed as to be in readiness to either support the attack or form a defensive flank to the right in case of any failure of the units to the south to secure their objectives.

While the companies were taking up their positions along the Alberta Road the enemy shelled the whole area with considerable severity, and swept "No Man's Land" almost continually with

machine-gun fire. That the Germans had knowledge of a contemplated attack soon became evident. They were doing all in their power to break up any concentration that might be contemplated and to prevent any forward movement across the open.

During the night scouts of the Battalion again worked forward to gather such information of the enemy positions as might be possible. They ascertained that both the outpost and front line were deep and strongly held, and that the protecting wire had been cut by our artillery fire in only a very few places.

II.

Zero hour for the attack was set for 3:45 a.m. on May 3rd. At this hour the artillery barrage was timed to fall upon a line some 250 yards east of the Battalion outposts, and to rest there for six minutes. During this interval it was anticipated that the attacking waves would be through the enemy wire and in position for a strong simultaneous assault upon the enemy front-line trenches when the barrage lifted.

The line of attack of the 31st Battalion was due east until the New German Trench, which was, in effect, the outpost line of the enemy, should be reached. The attack would then change direction to north-east, and assault the main line of the enemy defences near their junction with the Arleux Loop.

In the darkness of the early morning the men of Alberta waited for the barrage to commence which would send them "over the top." In spite of the heavy enemy bombardment, there were few casualties before the opening of the attack; but in front, swept by rifle and machine-gun fire and an open target for enemy shells, lay "No Man's Land," and beyond that — the enemy wire.

Promptly at 3.45 a.m. the barrage came down on the German positions, the whole terrain erupting suddenly into red flashes of bursting shells. In the darkness the men of the 31st Battalion climbed the parapet and went forward to the attack. Even as they did so the German counter-barrage fell on the leading companies and the deadly German machine-gun fire slashed through their ranks.

Onward and upward over the gently-sloping ground the attacking waves pressed at the double. In the darkness men stum-

bled over debris and pitched into shell holes, to rise and again push forward. Others fell, riddled with machine-gun bullets or disrupted by bursting shell, to rise no more.

Fire from the enemy's batteries and frontal fire from the New German Trench were supplemented by enfilade fire from the trenches of the Arleux Loop on the Battalion's left. Through this inferno of bursting shell and humming bullets went the men of the 31st for a distance of 250 yards, every one of which held death.

The concertina wire entanglements guarding the New German Trench were reached. They were almost intact. The old tragedy of infantry faced by uncut wire was re-enacted. Frantically, amid a hail of bullets, men tried to find or force a way through, and fell while they strove.

They got through, paying dearly for the success. The enemy still put up a stubborn resistance, and a fierce fight with bomb, bayonet and clubbed rifle ensued before the trench was taken.

By this time the barrage was falling on the enemy front-line positions some 450 yards further east. The delay incidental to the uncut wire and the enemy's resistance in the New German Trench had caused the 31st Battalion to be somewhat behind schedule. Without any unnecessary delay, therefore, the attacking companies, now much reduced in strength, pushed on in a north-easterly direction towards their main objective.

The enemy shell fire now became very intense. Guns from the neighbourhood of Avion, to the north-west, were enfilading the Battalion, and taking it partially from the rear. In fact so severe and confused was the shelling that it was difficult to distinguish between the shell-bursts from the supporting artillery and those from the enemy batteries in the vicinity of Avion.

In spite of this storm of shells, and of rifle and machine-gun fire from front and flank, the men of the 31st Battalion, regardless of casualties, went forward. Again they reached enemy wire, this time that which guarded the main Oppy-Mericourt line. Again they found it cut in a few places only. Again men were sacrificed as they raced along the entanglements looking for gaps.

Where the wire was cut, parties of the 31st Battalion dribbled through and approached the German front line; but the groups

were small and isolated, and were in the midst of a determined foe. Owing to the darkness and general confusion, moreover, each party gained the impression that it alone had penetrated the German wire.

Some of the attacking troops had taken, upon leaving the New German Trench, a direction too far to the north, and had come upon the wire in front of the Arleux Loop. Here, as in the case of the main defence line, small groups filtered through gaps in the wire and entered the enemy positions under the impression that they were in the German front line.

Under the circumstances neither the parties in the Arleux Loop nor those in front of the main trench system could accomplish anything in the way of a further advance. Small in numbers and without contact between each other, they were practically helpless. They were subjected to a vicious cross-fire of rifles and machine guns from the Arleux Loop and the main Oppy-Mericourt positions, which inflicted heavy casualties and further weakened the already weak detachments.

With the coming of daylight the situation became desperate. The men of the assaulting companies who had managed to get through the wire took to the shell holes to fight back at enemy snipers, or to get cover from the machine guns. Others attempted to dig themselves in in front of the German wire. Those who had failed to get through the entanglements remained out in "No Man's Land" during the morning and rejoined the Battalion later in the day.

Meanwhile, to the right, the 27th Battalion had run into serious difficulties. With the exception of one company under Lieut. R. G. Combe, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, it had failed to reach its final objectives. It had, however, established a footing in the enemy front line, which it had held against all attacks.

At daybreak, Capt. Blair, with a remnant of C Company of the 31st Battalion, was out in front of the Arleux Loop. Although wounded in the arm, he refused to retire. Other detached parties of the 31st Battalion were in front of the main German positions in the angle formed by the Oppy-Mericourt line and the Loop.

The position of these troops was extremely exposed and dangerous. It formed a sharp re-entrant which was enfiladed from

both flanks and swept by machine-gun fire from the front. Major W. W. Piper, the senior officer on the spot, appraised the situation and realized its gravity. Neither the 31st Battalion nor the 27th Battalion on its right had gained the objectives of the battle plan, and there was no longer any hope that such objectives could be gained for the time being.

Major Piper decided, therefore, to make good the line of the Alberta Road. All men were recalled to this line and a block was established in the Arleux Loop to prevent the enemy from filtering through while the Battalion underwent its reorganization.

As soon as all survivors had been assembled and the several companies organized, Capt. J. H. L'Amy and Lieut. A. E. Metcalf were sent out on a reconnaissance of the ground in front of the Battalion. As a result of their observations it appeared probable that a determined bombing attack would drive the enemy out of his positions in the New German Trench, which he had again reoccupied. A report to this effect was sent back to the Commanding Officer, who immediately ordered the attack to be made.

Early in the afternoon, Lieut. C. S. Robertson took a bombing section and began working down the Loop, bombing all dugouts and driving the enemy before him. Eventually he succeeded in reaching the junction of the New German Trench and the Loop. At this point he established a block. At the same time Lieut. A. E. Metcalf, M.C., took another bombing section and bombed his way down the New German Trench. He cleared it, capturing nine prisoners and a machine gun. Immediately A and D Companies swarmed into the trench, where they were soon joined by the men who had taken cover in shell holes in the open ground during the early part of the day.

Lieut. Metcalf then pushed forward from the right with a patrol, and succeeded in establishing contact with the left flank of the 27th Battalion in the German front line. Throughout the remainder of the day attempts were made to gain ground down the Loop. These were unsuccessful owing to the severity of the enemy machine-gun fire.

Meanwhile the 1st Brigade of the 1st Canadian Division, on the right of the 6th Brigade, had won through to Fresnoy in the face of devastating machine-gun and artillery fire, and had

advanced about 1000 yards beyond the village. Owing to the check which the units of the 6th Brigade had suffered, however, its left flank was "in the air," and later on the position became untenable.

At 3.30 p.m. the enemy made a determined counter-attack upon the New German Line. It was met by Lewis gun and rifle fire. The fight was short, but extremely bitter, the Germans pressing forward with the utmost vigour and resolution in spite of casualties. An S.O.S. signal for artillery aid was sent up and promptly responded to, the shell fire breaking^d up the enemy formations and bringing the attack to a conclusion.

As soon as darkness fell the men of the 31st Battalion commenced to dig a new trench from near the end of the New German Trench eastward to connect with the left flank of the 27th Battalion in the German front line. Throughout the night the troops worked with feverish energy under a continual barrage of shells and machine-gun bullets, which took toll of the workers. It was hard and nerve racking labour; but the dawn of the following morning, May 4th, saw the task accomplished and the positions of the 6th Brigade thereby secured.

At 6.00 a.m. the Alberta unit was relieved by the 29th Battalion, and moved into support. This was located only 700 yards behind the front line; but for the men, wearied as they were by the strenuous fighting and hard work of the past thirty-six hours, even this partial respite was welcome.

During the night the enemy shelled the Battalion area heavily with gas shells. Parties detailed to clear the ground of dead and wounded found the task a dangerous and difficult one. In addition to the gas, the enemy snipers were extremely active and the ground was sprayed periodically with machine-gun bullets. Many of the shell casualties picked up were horribly mutilated, and some were mere fragments.

Throughout the day of May 7th enemy artillery gave the men of the 31st Battalion no rest. Hour by hour the guns pounded the Canadian positions without cessation. From the front salvo after salvo was poured into the area, while from Avion a heavy flanking bombardment was taking troops in the forward positions from the left rear. One shell, bursting in the 31st

Battalion lines, killed seven men, literally blowing them to pieces. From the clouds enemy aircraft bombed the trenches or, flying low, machine-gunned their defenders.

To these enemy activities the British artillery and Air Force seemed unable to make any effective reply. As one member of the Battalion wrote in his war diary, "The day of May 7th gave one a most unpleasant feeling of inferiority, and we seemed to be getting into a position very similar to that of the Ypres Salient."

III.

On the night of May 7th the 31st Battalion was relieved by the 20th Battalion, and moved from support into reserve at Thelus Cave. The relief was completed soon after 1.00 a.m. on May 8th. About an hour later Battalion Headquarters moved out, passing through a heavy barrage, largely composed of gas shells. Many suffered a good deal from the poison fumes. At about 2.30 a.m., however, it commenced to rain, and continued to do so until 9 o'clock, the steady downpour affording a welcome relief from the gas.

The operations of the 31st Battalion from May 1st to May 8th had been somewhat costly in respect to man-power, although the losses were less than might have been expected in view of the desperate nature of the fighting and the very heavy shelling to which the unit had been subjected. Lieuts. J. M. Morton, F. Kingsmith, W. R. Barnes, M.C., and R. G. W. Eland had been killed in action, together with a total of 41 other ranks. Eight officers and 132 N.C.O.'s. and men had been wounded and there were 56 missing — many of whom were probably dead. Total casualties were, therefore, 12 officers and 229 other ranks, or nearly 48 per cent. of the effective strength as at May 1st. By companies, the casualties were divided as follows: A Company, 41; B Company, 43; C Company, 95; D Company, 62.

IV.

The heavy shelling of May 7th had been a clear indication that an attack would probably be launched by the Germans. It was no surprise, therefore, when about dawn news arrived that the enemy had attacked and recaptured Fresnoy, and that the front of the 1st Division had been withdrawn some 2000 yards to the Winnipeg

Road. This retirement left the 19th Battalion, on the 6th Brigade frontage, with its right flank "in the air." Orders arrived on the afternoon of the 8th for the 31st Battalion to move forward to the Railway Embankment to replace the 21st Battalion, which had been ordered to counter-attack. The men were so exhausted, however, with the severe fighting which they had been through and the continual shell fire to which they had been subjected that the order was countermanded, and the 27th Battalion was sent forward from reserve.

The counter-attack on Fresnoy failed. The village remained in German hands, and the Canadian line was finally established to the east of Arleux and thence northwards across the Arleux Loop.

So came to an end the part played by the Canadian Corps in the Battle of Arras. Much had been achieved, and once again the men of the Dominion had proved their fighting worth. In casualties the cost, although heavy, had been considerably lighter than that paid in the fighting on the Somme. Excluding the struggle for Fresnoy, the total casualties suffered by the Canadian Corps from April 1st had been less than 22,000 of all ranks.

Sir Julian Byng, the Corps Commander, summed up the success achieved in a letter to his troops, in which he wrote:

"The brilliant operations during the last month culminating in the capture of Arleux and Fresnoy, seem to give me an opportunity of expressing to all ranks the pride I feel in commanding the Canadian Corps. Since the 9th of April, when the offensive against Vimy Ridge began, to the morning of May 3rd, when Fresnoy was captured and consolidated, it has been one series of successes only attainable by troops whose courage, discipline, and initiative, stand pre-eminent. Nine villages have passed into our hands. Eight German divisions have been met and defeated. Over 5,000 prisoners have been captured and booty comprising some 64 guns and howitzers, 106 trench mortars, 126 machine guns are now the trophies of the Canadian Corps."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

Rest and Reorganization

I.

After the operations at Fresnoy the 31st Battalion was at little more than one-third its full strength, excluding those who were absent through sickness. The men, too, were weary from the hard work, continual shelling and strenuous fighting to which they had been subjected. The unit was in urgent need of rest and reorganization; and the same thing applied, in greater or less degree, to every battalion of the Canadian Corps.

On the night of May 10th the 6th Brigade was relieved by the 5th Brigade, and the 31st Battalion went back to the rest camp at Aux Rietz. Here, during the sunny days that followed, the men rested and recuperated, spending the time in bathing parades, football matches, writing letters, playing cards and overhauling their equipment. A special concert was organized for the Battalion while it was in rest by Capt. Pearson, of the Y.M.C.A., a Calgary officer well known to many members of the unit.

On Sunday, May 13th, following church parade, the Alberta Regiment relieved the 24th Battalion just east of Neuville St. Vaast. On the same day Lieut.-Col. Bell assumed temporary command of the 6th Brigade during the absence of Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen on leave, command of the Battalion being taken over by Major E. S. Doughty. Four days later the 31st Battalion relieved the 29th in brigade support in the Vimy-Lievin line. No sooner was the relief completed than wiring parties were sent out which spent the hours of darkness in driving stakes and putting up wire. This operation was much hindered, and was made unusually dangerous, by the number of flares put up by the enemy and the frequent gusts of machine-gun bullets with which he swept the ground. In spite of these activities, however, the work was carried out satisfactorily. On the following morn-

ing a heartening sight was witnessed by the men when scores of British aircraft flew out over the lines and deep into enemy territory, bombing and machine-gunning the German trenches and taking photographs of their positions.

Aware that a relief was in progress on the night of May 19th, the German artillery hammered the roads leading up to the front line. Fortunately he was a little too previous, and the force of his bombardment had spent itself before the 31st Battalion went into the relief of the 26th.

Three days, marked principally by some vigorous artillery activity on both sides, were spent in the front line, and then the Battalion went back into brigade support in the Bailleul-Riamont Switch. This position was extended and revetted during the days which followed, and the line was later renamed "Canada Trench." Three days later Col. Bell returned and resumed command of the Battalion.

On the early morning of May 27th, the 31st Battalion again returned to the rest camp at Aux Rietz. During the day the enemy subjected the camp to a persistent and most accurate bombardment with long-range guns. The tale of casualties in the Brigade commenced to mount up, so on the following day the whole camp moved to a new location a mile and a half south-east of Mont St. Eloy and half a mile west of its former site.

For three days the men rested and attended parades and concerts. On May 30th a brigade inspection was held by Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, who expressed himself as "highly satisfied" with the appearance and bearing of the men. On the following morning the 31st Battalion, in full marching order and with all transport, moved out for Camblain L'Abbe, where it took over huts vacated by the 16th Battalion. Here the men rested for the night, and at 8.00 a.m., on June 1st, once more marched out en route for Houdain, which was reached at noon.

On June 5th the Brigade was again reviewed at Ruitz by that fine old soldier, Major-Gen. Steele. It was a bright, warm day, and the men presented an imposing spectacle when drawn up in hollow square, for the inspection. After presenting ribbons and decorations to those who had won them at Vimy, the Général addressed a few appropriate remarks to all ranks, and the

ceremony ended with the usual march past. On the following day Lieut.-Col. Bell proceeded on leave, command of the Battalion once more devolving upon Major E. S. Doughty.

In the warm, sunny weather of the following days training progressed rapidly. An intensive syllabus was followed, which kept the men fully occupied, the field work being supplemented with lectures. On June 9th, officer reinforcements and returned casualties joined the Battalion. These included Lieuts. W. Micklewright, C. H. Taylor, S. J. Clark, R. W. Buchanan and L. A. Wildman, together with a number of other ranks. On the same day Sir Julian Byng relinquished command of the Canadian Corps to take over that of the Third Army. He was succeeded by Major-Gen. A. W. Currie, who was promoted from the command of the 1st Canadian Division. Since the days when he had commanded the 2nd Canadian Brigade at St. Julien in the Second Battle of Ypres, Gen. Currie's career had been particularly brilliant, and as he was a Canadian by birth, his selection to the command of the Canadian Corps was generally popular. It is interesting to note that this was the first appointment to a corps command of any officer in the British forces who was not a regular soldier, and it is not too much to state that his career during the remainder of the war fully justified his selection.

A pleasant break in the routine of training was afforded by the Battalion sports, which were held on June 12th on the parade ground at Houdain. The weather was delightfully fine, and there were numerous entrants for all the eighteen events on the programme. In addition to the competitions confined to the men of the Battalion, there were races for the boys and girls of the town, who turned up in force and entered very thoroughly into the spirit of the gathering. The day closed with a concert provided by the 5th Canadian Battalion Concert Troupe, at the conclusion of which Major E. S. Doughty, Acting Battalion Commander, presented the prizes won during the sports.

A few days later, on June 16th, another athletic sports meeting was held. This was the Brigade meeting, and took place at Haillicourt. The men of the 31st Battalion went down in motor lorries, and in the athletic events did very well, securing four first and five second prizes. During the day the officers of the 31st Battalion were the guests of their comrades from Winnipeg of the

27th Battalion. A concert in the evening by the massed bands of the Brigade made a pleasant conclusion to an enjoyable afternoon of sport.

On the same day a draft of 250 men joined the 31st Battalion at Houdain, most of them being from the 202nd Battalion. These were a fine body of men, few being less than 5 ft. 8 ins. in height, and many of them being specialists in Lewis-gun work, bombing, signalling or sniping. The 202nd had originally been the Edmonton Sportman's Battalion, and had just completed a course of strenuous training in England. On the following day Major Doughty was evacuated to hospital, and Major W. W. Piper took over temporarily the command of the Battalion.

During the next few days a number of officer reinforcements reported for duty. On June 18th Lieut. W. J. Hall arrived; four days later Lieuts. H. C. C. Beaumont, H. S. Higgings, M. E. Patterson, E. G. Grant and J. A. McKenzie joined the unit; on June 24th Lieuts. H. P. R. Brown and W. A. Benn reported, and on the 26th, Lieut. J. H. Gainor was taken on the strength. These reinforcements completed the establishment of the Battalion, and as soon as the necessary reorganization had been accomplished intensive training was proceeded with.

On June 26th the officers of the 31st Battalion gave a most memorable dinner at the Hotel du Centre, Houdain, at which a number of distinguished guests were present including Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, C.M.G., his Brigade Staff, the officers commanding the other units in the Brigade as well as Major W. B. Forster, M.C., Major A. H. Jukes, D.S.O., Lieut.-Col. Davidson-Houston, C.M.G., M.P. Following the dinner a concert was given by the minstrel troupe of the 31st Battalion Band in the Y.M.C.A. Room, Town Hall, Houdain.

At this time considerable attention was being given by the Brigade to musketry. At the end of a five days' course of intensive practice on the ranges the averages of the several battalions stood as follows:

31st Battalion	54.73 per cent.
27th Battalion	51.84 per cent.
29th Battalion	45.78 per cent.
28th Battalion	45.6 per cent.

On June 29th, following several days of almost continual rain, the Battalion was inspected by the Divisional Commander, Major-Gen. H. E. Burstall, C.B., C.M.G., A.D.C. The roads were ankle deep in mud when the men moved off to the parade ground, which was situated on the south-eastern outskirts of the town of Houdain. By 10:30 a.m. the Battalion was drawn up in mass formation, and a preliminary inspection was made by the Battalion Commander, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O. Shortly after 11 o'clock the Divisional Commander drove up and received the general salute. He was accompanied by Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, C.M.G., and Lieut.-Col. N. W. Webber, D.S.O., General Staff Officer of the 2nd Division. A very thorough general inspection was then carried out, which included the personal cleanliness of the men, of their rifles and equipment, platoon and small-arms drill, kit inspection and gas drill from the slung position. A thorough examination was also made by Col. Webber of the Battalion transport, specialist sections, stretcher bearers and the headquarters of the several companies.

There were 1026 of all ranks on parade, including 38 officers. It was after 1 o'clock before the inspection was completed. The Battalion then reassembled in mass formation and marched past in column of route, Major-Gen. Burstall taking the salute. The Divisional Commander reported on the inspection that "everything was very satisfactory."

II.

The month of June ended in dull and cloudy weather, with much rain. For the 31st Battalion the past four weeks had been most propitious. It had come through all inspections with credit, and had much more than held its own in numerous competitions. As already stated, the Alberta unit had achieved the highest average in musketry in the Brigade, and had won more than its share of prizes in the Brigade Athletic Sports. In addition to this its Transport Section had won one first and two second prizes out of four entries in the Divisional Horse Show. In the Brigade Snipers and Scouts Competition, held at the Corps Sniping School at Pernes on June 17th, the 31st Battalion headed the Brigade both in shooting and observation. In yet another scouting competition, held at Beugin on June 20th and 21st, which included arrangements

for billeting, mapping, daylight reconnaissance of enemy position and siting of trenches, the 31st was again the winner, with the 27th Battalion in second place, the Brigade Observers in third, the 28th in fourth, and the 29th in fifth. In fact, in both athletics and soldierly exercises, the men of Alberta had shown, during this peaceful month of June, 1917, that they had no superiors in the Canadian Corps.

III.

July 1st, Dominion Day, was the last day in rest before the march back to the lines in front of Lens. In many respects it was memorable. The weather was cloudy, but fine, and the whole of the 6th Brigade assembled for church parade, which was held in the vicinity of Ruitz. Gen. Sir H. S. Horne, K.C.B., Commander of the First Army, Major-Gen. H. E. Burstall, commanding the 2nd Canadian Division, Major-Gen. P. G. Twining and Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen were present at the parade. At the conclusion of a very inspiring and appropriate service, which was dedicated to the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Confederation of the Dominion of Canada and to the memory of the Canadian dead who had fallen in the war, and which was most impressively conducted by the Rev. Capt. Blackburn, the Army Commander spoke a few words to the Brigade. The service was then concluded with the National Anthem played by the massed bands of the 6th Brigade.

It was 1.30 p.m. when the 31st Battalion reached its billets at Houdain. Late in the afternoon the Transport Section conveyed all surplus stores, baggage, kits, etc., to Barlin, from which point they were transported by light railway to the Lens area. That night, to celebrate the day, a free issue of beer was given to the men, making a fitting climax to one of the most ideal rest periods in the Battalion's history.

At 3.00 p.m., on July 2nd, the Alberta Regiment left Houdain and marched via the Olhain-Fresnicourt-Verdrel route to Marqueffles Farm. Here the men took over comfortable billets in farm buildings and miners' cottages. At Verdrel, during the march, the new Corps Commander, Lieut.-Gen. A. W. Currie, took the salute as the Brigade went through.

The greater portion of the day of July 3rd was spent in giving the newly-joined men instruction in front-line routine and trench warfare. It may be of some interest to the lay reader, unversed in military matters, to give here a brief description of such routine as it was carried out from day to day upon the Western Front when no major action was in progress.

When a battalion was due for duty in the front line, orders were dispatched by runner from Brigade Headquarters to the headquarters of the battalion concerned, stating what unit it was to relieve and the time at which the relief was to be effected, together with any further instructions which might be considered necessary. Copies of this order were immediately made, and sent out to the officers commanding each of the four companies, to the Battalion Quartermaster, the Transport Officer, the Medical Officer and officers in charge of specialist sections. At the stated time the men paraded in heavy marching order, each carrying his proper quota of ammunition and one day's rations. In addition it not infrequently happened that sandbags, wire and other trench paraphernalia had to be taken forward by the overburdened men.

As soon as possible after the receipt of the order to effect the relief, a small advance party of the relieving battalion was sent forward to take over ammunition, bombs, shovels and other trench stores from the out-going unit. These stores were checked and signed for. The officer in charge of the party also made careful note of any special information which the garrison being relieved might have to pass on.

At the stated time, usually about an hour before the battalion was due to march out, the men fell in by platoons. Platoon commanders then checked up on the men's rations and ammunition, inspected their rifles and gas masks, saw that all water bottles were filled and that every man was in readiness before reporting his platoon "correct" to his company commander. A "marching-out state" was also prepared which accounted for every man who was going forward with the battalion.

Promptly at the appointed hour the companies moved out in their proper order for the trenches. Platoon formation was usually adopted, except when enemy shell fire was encountered, in which case the platoons broke up into sections.

Silently, under cover of the darkness, the men of the relieving battalion went forward across the open and up the communication trenches to the front line. Immediately upon arrival patrols were thrown out to cover the entire battalion frontage and guard against surprise. Then the company commanders of the relieving battalion met their opposite numbers in the out-going unit to discuss the garrisoning of the trenches, danger points, disposition of the enemy and other matters of a like nature. Meanwhile the process of "taking-over" was proceeded with. Listening posts were manned, Lewis guns changed, sentries posted and the men distributed. The trench was then signed for, and from that moment the incoming unit was responsible for holding it against attack, for its upkeep generally and for all sanitation arrangements.

During the night sentries were usually posted in pairs, and relieved one at a time. It was found by experience that the shared responsibility decreased the probability of sentries getting "the wind up" and starting an alarm by opening fire at bushes and other innocuous features in "No Man's Land." No one who has not experienced front-line sentry-duty will realize how strangely, in the darkness, familiar features of the landscape can change their appearance or how inanimate things can appear to be moving. Many an alarm has been started by an inexperienced sentry firing at figments of his own imagination.

The usual disposition of a battalion on the Western Front was two companies in the front line, including the outposts where such had been established, one company in close support and one in reserve. While in the line every man, with the exception of day sentries, snipers, and such few others as may have been assigned day duties, had to "stand to" at dusk and remain on duty until daylight. During the night there were usually many duties to perform: new wire to be placed or broken wire to be repaired; rations to be carried from the battalion dump, perhaps one or two miles to the rear; trenches to be revetted and outposts or rifle pits to be dug; patrols to be sent out to scour "No Man's Land" — a duty usually assigned to the battalion scouts, who were especially trained in such work; and, of course, always the sentry duties.

As a general rule, when half the anticipated tour had been completed, orders would be received from Battalion Headquarters

that the two companies in the front line would be relieved by those in support and reserve. The change was usually most welcome to the front-line companies. The chief task of the company in support was to be prepared to dislodge the enemy should he gain a footing in the line. There was no longer immediate contact with the enemy, nor reason to be constantly on the alert against surprise. The shelling was usually just as severe as that experienced in the front line, and the resulting casualties were not infrequently higher, owing to the fact that often the men in the support positions were more closely assembled than those in the line.

The company in reserve was usually further to the rear. Its function was to counter-attack on either the left or the right sub-sector should events transpire to make such an attack necessary.

It was seldom, however, that the companies in support and reserve were permitted to stand by and wait with folded arms. Almost always there was work of one kind or another to be performed: new trenches to be dug or communication trenches to be repaired; strong points or machine-gun emplacements to be constructed; cable to be laid or other jobs of a like nature to be attended to. For the soldier in France was not merely a fighting man: he was also navvy and road mender, labourer and engineer, messenger and scavenger and, very frequently, an effective substitute for the pack-mule.

IV.

At 8.30 p.m. on July 3rd the 31st Battalion left its billets at Marqueffles Farm and proceeded forward to the relief of the 6th and 8th Battalions, Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment) in the left sub-section, Laurent Section, in front of Lens. It was 4.30 a.m. on July 4th before the relief was completed. The slowness with which the change over was effected was due to the fact that all the roads were badly congested with traffic and also, in part, to the very complicated nature of the positions taken over.

Some little while before the return of the 6th Brigade to the line from rest, the Germans had introduced a new form of gas. This was the now well-known mustard gas. Upon its first introduction its effects were terrible. It ate through the clothing of

the men into the skin, burning deeply and causing water blisters. If it reached the lungs in breathing the result was death, accompanied by excruciating pain. Until counter measures were discovered and adopted, it was the cause of many casualties.

As the 31st Battalion took over its new area, plans for the capture of Hill 70, and subsequently of Lens, were being prepared. As a prelude to the proposed attack the British artillery was deluging, hour by hour, the enemy positions with gas and high explosive shells. The way was being paved for further successes.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Front at Lens

I.

It has already been pointed out that the fighting of the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge, and later in the neighbourhood of Fresnoy, were parts of a major British thrust extending from Lens in the north to Queant in the south. Owing to the strength and depth of the enemy positions, no break-through was accomplished. Very valuable results were attained, however. Many important strategic points were taken; much territory was won; except for one short sector, the famous Hindenburg Line was penetrated and over-run from Cavrelle to Bullecourt, a distance of about 11 miles; many prisoners and guns were captured, and much war material fell into British hands; a serious blow had been dealt to the enemy morale while, lastly, the persistent and successful attacks had prevented the dispatch of enemy forces against the demoralized French armies.

In the general withdrawal of the enemy lines which this attack had enforced, the German positions in front of Lens had been evacuated, and a new line established. This new line was some two miles behind the old one and was located only a matter of some hundreds of yards to the west of the outlying suburbs of the town.

Lens itself was strongly fortified, and was commanded on the north by Hill 70, which was regarded by the enemy as absolutely impregnable. A complicated system of trenches, extremely heavily wired, protected the western approaches to the town and formed a network amid the shattered houses and shell-torn streets. Trussed pill-boxes of reinforced concrete, so strong that they could withstand direct hits from 5.9-inch shells and armed with machine guns, were plentifully sprinkled throughout the area; and deep subterranean galleries, excavated by the miners in times of peace, protected the enemy from the effects of even the heaviest gun fire.

Hill 70 itself was a veritable maze of heavily-wired trenches, with many shell-proof tunnels and galleries, pill-boxes so placed as to bring cross or enfilade fire to bear on attacking troops and every other defensive device which an experienced and wonderfully methodical enemy could contrive.

For some time before the 6th Canadian Brigade moved into the area activity on both sides had been steadily increasing. Behind the British lines a concentration of artillery had been in progress, and the enemy positions had been bombarded with a gathering intensity. In reply, the enemy had brought up more guns, and daily the mutual bombardments had been increasing in severity.

On July 4th the 46th British Division handed over its line to the 2nd Canadian Division, and twelve days later the 1st Canadian Division released the 6th British Division in the Loos Sector. Thereafter the fighting in front of Lens was almost entirely in the hands of the Canadian Corps. The frontage held extended from a point 1,000 yards south-west of Mericourt to 1,500 yards north-east of Loos, with the 3rd Division in the Avion Sector from Mericourt to the Souchez River, the 2nd Division in the Lens-Laurent Sector from the Souchez River to a point 1,000 yards south-east of Loos and the 1st Division on the left, from this point to the Corps boundary north of Loos.

II.

During the first tour of the 31st Battalion in the line before Lens the artilleries of both sides were extremely active. Visibility was good, and the gunners made the best of the opportunity. On the first day the enemy used trench mortars against the left flank of B Company, killing one man and wounding seven others.

On the night of July 7th the awkward salient in the British line in which the 31st Battalion was located, and which was known as "Cornwall Salient," was evacuated. This operation was successfully carried out after a most trying day during which the enemy bombarded the whole Battalion frontage, and that of the unit on its left, with trench mortars and high explosive shell. This bombardment cost the 31st Battalion 18 casualties, of which 5 were killed instantly.

Again during the night of the 9th a heavy and prolonged bombardment was brought down upon the lines of the Alberta unit, killing 6 men and wounding 12, and seriously interfering with the wiring activities which were being carried out. On the following night the troops were relieved, and moved into billets in miners' cottages at Maroc South.

On the morning of July 11th the Canadian Corps had the signal honour of receiving a visit from His Majesty, King George V. The Commander of the First Army, General Sir Henry Horne, with his staff and Lieut.-Gen. A. W. Currie, met their Monarch on the road near Arras and drove with him east towards Souchez. News had spread that the King was coming, and thousands of soldiers assembled along the road to cheer him as he passed in his open car. No special parade had been called, and there was no guard of honour; but the King walked informally through the lines chatting to the men. Later the party ascended to the crest of Vimy Ridge, and viewed the line of consolidation from Lens southward to Fresnoy. Here, in the shell-torn field which, on April 9th, had passed into the hands of the Canadian Corps, the King conferred the honour of knighthood upon General Currie.

At 2.00 a.m. on July 12th orders were received by the 31st Battalion for a twenty-four-hour tour in the line, relieving the 18th Battalion. This move was part of a change-over-of fronts between the 6th and 4th Brigades. Although so short, this tour was severe, and cost the unit 11 casualties — 2 missing, but believed killed, and 9 wounded. Following this spell in the trenches, the Battalion made its way into brigade reserve at Angres, where it occupied the old German support lines, dugouts and cellars exactly opposite the Souchez left sub-section which it had occupied the previous winter. Angres, being under enemy observation, parades were not possible, but C Company, with one platoon of D Company, went forward to dig a support line.

On the evening of July 16th the 21st Battalion relieved the 31st, the latter proceeding to billets at Bouvigny. Here the men rested for six days before going forward again to relieve the 22nd Battalion in brigade support in the Laurent Section. In effecting the relief, three men of the advance party of B Company were wounded, but apart from these casualties there were no mishaps. At the Cite St. Pierre, where the Battalion was now located, the

billets were good, but an unusual number of fatigues, including the carrying forward of a large number of trench-mortar shells on the night of the 23rd, rather detracted from the joy of life.

The next move of the Battalion was to the front line in the Laurent Section, where it relieved the 28th Battalion on July 26th. At 2.45 a.m. on the following day, just as the relief was completed, a special company of the Royal Engineers put over a gas attack from 1,200 projectors, containing 15½ tons of gas, on the Cite St. Laurent and the Cite St. Theodore. At the same time, Stokes' mortars fired 900 rounds of smoke and gas shells into the enemy trenches. The wind was ideal, and the clouds of gas could be seen drifting over the German lines. It soon became apparent that the gas had reached the enemy gun positions, as the fire of his artillery gradually died away.

On Sunday morning, July 29th, the enemy bombarded the Battalion position with trench-mortar gas shells, killing one man and incapacitating two others. During the day the British artillery kept up an almost continual bombardment of the enemy wire, which swelled at times into a practice barrage, and effectively kept down enemy artillery activity. On the following morning, just before 3 o'clock, another 15 tons of gas was discharged against the enemy positions.

The 31st Battalion was relieved during the following night, and moved back into support at Cite St. Pierre. The tour had cost 31 casualties, 6 killed and 25 wounded — a modest total considering the bad front which the unit had held.

The Battalion statistics, from the time of its arrival in France in September, 1915, up to the end of July, 1917, are of considerable interest. The total casualties had been 2,001, made up of 372 killed, 1,450 wounded and 179 missing. Of the last named, it is now known that the majority were killed; of the wounded, 377 had returned for duty with the Battalion. In the commissioned ranks, 94 officers had been taken on the strength during the period under review, and 43 had been appointed to commissions from the ranks. Drafts totaling 2,691 had been received, the difference between the number of casualties and the number of reinforcements being accounted for by men who had died of sickness, who had been

invalided out or who had been transferred to other units or services. On August 1st, 1917, the strength of the unit was 37 officers and 841 other ranks.

III.

On the night of August 2nd the 31st Battalion again returned to the front line, where it relieved the 28th Battalion. On the same day Lieut. W. Langtry was mentioned in Line of Communication Routine Orders for saving the lives of two French nursing sisters who, while bathing at the Paris Plage, got into difficulties. Second-Lieut. J. C. A. Tooke, of the South African Light Infantry, who also went to their assistance, was drowned.

The tour commencing August 2nd was also a short one. The weather was cold and wet, and the trenches were very muddy. The enemy artillery was not quite so unpleasantly active as usual, but accounted for 59 casualties, 7 killed and 52 wounded. On the whole conditions were anything but enjoyable, and there was little regret when the Battalion moved out for billets in Fosse 10 on the night of August 4th.

During the next few days the weather continued to be wet and cold, interfering with the training arrangements and practice on the rifle ranges. On August 9th the Battalion again moved forward. As a result of the rain, the going was very heavy, and the burdened troops found marching through the mud by no means pleasant. That night the unit relieved elements of the 18th and 19th Battalions in brigade support at Cite St. Pierre.

Carrying parties to transport trench-mortar bombs up to the front line and to bring up from the rear materials for the construction of bomb-proof cellars for the billeting of the men kept the Battalion working hard while in support. Conditions were not in any way improved by the bombardments with gas shells put over by the enemy, which rendered the use of the gas mask a frequent occurrence. The neighbourhood of Battalion Headquarters received particular attention in this regard, and Major E. S. Doughty, who was acting as Commanding Officer in the absence at Brigade of Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, was hit on the knee with a shell splinter and had to be sent back to hospital. The command of the Battalion thus devolved upon Major C. H. Westmore, the senior officer remaining with the unit.

On August 14th elements of the 4th and 5th Infantry Brigades relieved the 31st Battalion in support, and the Alberta Regiment moved back to the old British line in the Laurent Sector.

IV.

The general advance of the Canadian Corps against Lens commenced on the morning of August 15th. During this operation the 6th Brigade was in divisional support. Throughout the attack its four battalions — the 27th, 28th, 29th and 31st — stood to in readiness to go forward when called upon. Their services were not required, however; and, except for the provision of carrying parties, they took no part in the advance.

As in the case of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the preparations for the attack on Lens had been of the most exhaustive nature. Areas behind the lines had been taped out to represent the enemy positions, which had been very completely photographed from the air. Over this taped territory each unit had rehearsed the part it was to play in the advance until every company and every platoon and every section knew just what it had to do, and how it must do it.

The task which faced the Canadian Corps was one which might have daunted the bravest. The enemy positions were tremendously strong and were strongly garrisoned. His positions bristled with machine guns, many of them protected by emplacements which could defy the heaviest artillery. His wire entanglements were of unusual depth, and reached to a height of from five to six feet in front of his trenches; it seemed that no gun fire, however severe, could possibly demolish them. Behind his lines was a great concentration of artillery of all calibres, and many reserve units stood in readiness for counter-attacks. His airmen were daring and active, showing great persistence in observation and in bombing and machine-gunning the Canadian areas.

The men of the Dominion were confident and determined, however, and every one of them knew his job. In the preliminary training a new, or rather a modified, formation had been practiced. At this time the war strength of a company was 145 of all ranks. A company was divided into four platoons and each platoon into four sections. For the attack on Lens these sections were composed respectively of Lewis gunners, bombers, riflemen and

rifle-grenadiers. The sections mutually supported one another, and each had its own particular functions. As a rule the machine gunners supported the short advances of the other sections; the rifle-grenadiers, from a distance of 50 yards or so, dropped their grenades into the enemy trenches and strong points; and the bombers, from closer range, kept the enemy under cover during the final assault of the riflemen. The men were numbered off from the senior N.C.O. to the junior private, and should No. 1 of any detachment become a casualty the command would be automatically taken over by No. 2 and so on, down to the last man.

For days before the attack the Canadian artillery had subjected the enemy positions to a heavy bombardment with gas and high-explosive shells, while gas had been projected over Lens whenever wind and weather were favourable. This gas, having a greater density than air, tended to settle and accumulate in depressions and to sink to the lowest level it could find. It must have made the deep tunnels and underground galleries which the enemy had adapted to his purpose at the cost of so much labour anything but comfortable and healthful billets.

During the whole of the night before the attack the artillery poured a steady cataract of high-explosive shells over the enemy positions, blowing in his trenches and damaging his wire. A short time before zero hour the batteries ceased fire, the hellish din of the guns and the bursting shells being suddenly superseded by an eerie silence. Then, with a crash which shook the solid earth, every gun in the area once more opened fire, and the barrage was on.

At 4:25 a.m. the Canadians went "over the top," the 1st Division on the left; then the 2nd Division, with its left flank on the Cite St. Laurent-Hulluch-La Bassee line; then on the right the 4th Division, which attacked immediately south of the Cite St. Laurent. The 3rd Division was in reserve.

Under cover of the terrific barrage, the first objectives were reached and taken in sixteen minutes. Consolidation was at once commenced, and eight minutes later the second wave of the attack passed over. At some points the attacking battalions met with stubborn resistance, but nothing could withstand their dash and determination. By 9:15 a.m. nearly all the main objectives were in Canadian hands.

A feature of this battle was the use of oil drums, which threw immense quantities of burning oil into the enemy trenches. These streams of hissing flame caused the utmost demoralization to the Germans, and rendered the winning of the first objectives an easy matter. Another feature of great importance was the co-operation of the Royal Air Force in sending out what were known as "contact patrols." When the infantry reached their objective, ground flares were ignited. These were easily discernible to the pilots of low flying aeroplanes, which were able to keep the artillery advised as to the exact position of the attacking troops.

During the night of August 15th, and in the early hours of the following morning, five furious counter-attacks were launched by the enemy in an attempt to regain a footing upon the slopes of Hill 70. In these attacks no less than 48 battalions, including supports and reserves, took part. So terrible was the Canadian artillery fire, however, and so active the Royal Air Force in reporting enemy concentrations, that whole formations were broken up, with enormous casualties, before they could commence their advance.

A most unusual situation developed on August 16th, during the second phase of the attack upon Lens. As the men moved forward they were met in the open by the Germans, who had chosen exactly the same hour to launch an attack. The two forces clashed between the walls of their respective barrages, which momentarily cut both Canadians and Germans from their supports. Some fierce hand-to-hand fighting with butt and bayonet ensued, in which the men of the Dominion soon began to show their superiority. Relentlessly, foot by foot, they pressed back their opponents, and succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Lens. Here they were forced to pause and consolidate their new line. Lens itself could not, for the moment, be wrested from its holders.

Altogether the attack of the Canadian Corps penetrated the German lines to a depth of about a mile on a two-mile frontage. Hill 70 was captured, together with the villages of Cite St. Laurent, Cite St. Elizabeth, Cite St. Emile and a portion of Cite St. Augustine. Many prisoners and machine guns were captured, together with quantities of war material. The casualties were heavy, but

were undoubtedly much lighter than those of the enemy. The action had been a marked success, and had once more demonstrated the magnificent fighting qualities of the Canadian Corps.

V.

Throughout the days of August 15th and 16th the men of the 31st Battalion had held themselves in readiness for any eventuality. On the 17th three shells dropped in the Battalion area, one of which exploded in C Company lines, killing one man and wounding three others. On the following day the unit moved up to the brigade support area, west of the Cite St. Pierre.

During the next few days most of the men were fully employed on carrying parties, transporting rifles, grenades, ammunition, wire and other supplies forward to the new Canadian line, where fierce fighting was still in progress. The Germans were in no mood to sit down quietly under the defeat which the Canadian Corps had administered. To them Lens, covering as it did vital railway communications to the east, was of supreme importance and had to be held regardless of cost. Counter-attack after counter-attack of the most determined nature, carried out by large forces after intensive artillery preparation and covered by heavy barrages, were launched against the Canadian positions. Some of these were broken up by our artillery, the fire of which was extraordinarily accurate and effective, ere they were fairly launched; some were repelled by rifle and machine-gun fire; some gained a measure of temporary success, penetrating the Canadian positions. There was an unusual amount of fierce hand-to-hand fighting in this phase of the battle, when the opposing forces met point to point and man to man, and contested the issue with primitive savagery.

By August 18th the enemy attacks on Hill 70 had died down, and the fiercest fighting had shifted southward to the front of the 4th Division. On August 21st the battle was again resumed on a large scale when the 2nd and 4th Divisions went forward once more with the object of closing in along the northern and western sides of the town of Lens.

In the action which followed the 31st Battalion was in brigade reserve. In the absence of Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, who was commanding the Brigade, and Major E. S. Doughty, who was in

hospital, the command of the Battalion was in the hands of Major C. H. Westmore.

The objectives of the 6th Brigade were Nuns' Alley from its junction with Commotion Trench southward to Cinnabar Trench; Cinnabar Trench as far as its junction with Combaf Trench, and thence southward to the "Y Roads." - These positions were some 500 yards beyond the front won in the fighting on the 15th.

Zero hour was 4:35 a.m., and the Brigade attacked with the 27th Battalion on the right and the 29th on the left, the 28th Battalion being in immediate support and the 31st in reserve. A few minutes before zero hour the enemy brought down a heavy bombardment on the Canadian lines, which was still continuing with unabated vigour when the British barrage opened with a crash. Thus, amid the dazing concussions of guns and bursting shells from both sides, the attack commenced.

In the fighting which followed Canadian and German troops, for the second time within a few days, met face to face in the open, and fought it out with butt and bayonet and bullet fired at point blank range. In the half-light of dawn the 29th Battalion ran into a heavy concentration of the enemy advancing across "No Man's Land" under cover of a barrage of mechanically-thrown grenades, and the fight was on. A bitter struggle ensued in which the enemy was slowly and relentlessly forced back to and out of his own line, leaving it in the hands of the Canadian regiment. The 29th Battalion had gained its objective.

A little while later, after some most severe fighting, the 27th Battalion also reached and captured the whole of its objective with the exception of one strong point which was impossible to approach.

Meanwhile the 4th Canadian Division, operating on the right of the 6th Brigade, had also secured all its objectives with the exception of Aloof Trench. This was to have been the contact point of the 4th Division and the right flank of the 27th Battalion, and failure to secure the trench in question left the latter unit with its flank in the air.

All that day the enemy maintained an exceedingly heavy shell fire upon the captured trenches, and made a series of most determined counter-attacks. With great audacity and courage, the Germans found gaps in the Canadian barrage, and kept dribbling through. This, on account of the conformation of the new front,

which had been thrust forward into the outskirts of Lens, was impossible to prevent without endangering the defending troops.

As the day wore on a persistent infantry fight for the newly won ground developed. Back and forth it swayed, bomb, bayonet, rifle and machine gun all playing their parts in the struggle. In spite of an almost constant stream of carrying parties engaged in bringing bombs from the dump to the front, the fighting battalions used them up more quickly than they could be brought forward.

All day the battle raged bitterly and practically without cessation, now one side and now the other gaining the upper hand. The conditions, however, favoured the enemy. Lens was packed with troops; and the Germans had greater reserves of men to draw upon and supplies of bombs more nearly at hand than had the Canadians. Gradually these advantages began to wear down the resistance of the weary men of the 27th and 29th Battalions. Regardless of losses which, considering the relatively small numbers engaged, were terrific, the enemy kept pouring in new troops and slowly gained the ascendancy. Yard by yard, still fighting desperately, the Canadians were forced back to their original positions.

Almost immediately the enemy brought down a tremendous barrage along the Brigade front, and there seemed to be every indication that an attack was about to be launched against the right flank. The Canadian artillery replied with such force and effect, however, that it broke up the attempted assembly and the bombing attacks were dispersed. With the approach of night things quietened down, with the opposing forces in their original positions.

It appears clear, from the abnormal number of enemy troops on its front and the bombardment brought down upon its positions before the advance commenced, that the attack of the 6th Brigade forestalled a counter-attack in force by the enemy. This is confirmed by the meeting in "No Man's Land" of the 29th Battalion and the 5th Guard Grenadiers. The Brigade had gained no ground, and had lost heavily, the total casualties being around 800; but the Iron Sixth had in no sense failed. Faced with unexpectedly powerful enemy forces, it had fought gallantly, and had given more than it had taken. Enemy dead littered the ground over which the fighting had taken place, and without any doubt the German losses during the day far exceeded those of the Canadians.

VI.

Early on August 21st both the Intelligence and Grenade Officers of the 31st Battalion were wounded by a stray shell that exploded close to Battalion Headquarters. At 9.30 a.m. on the same day two parties from C Company were dispatched to carry ammunition to the front line. One party of 30 men, under Lieut. G. S. Robertson, M.C., carried to the 27th Battalion Headquarters and a second party of 50 men, under Lieut. L. H. Irwin, carried to the Headquarters of the 29th Battalion. Although compelled to pass through heavy artillery fire, both parties succeeded in accomplishing their missions with small casualties, Lieut. Irwin's party making two trips. An hour later D Company furnished a party of 50 men, commanded by Lieut. H. C. C. Beaumont, for carrying bombs to the 29th Battalion. Upon arrival at Headquarters of this unit, it was found that no carriers were available to take the bombs forward to the line. The detachment of D Company volunteered to undertake this additional duty, and arrived in the forward positions just in time to replenish the exhausted bomb supply of the 29th Battalion. Lieut. Beaumont then immediately proceeded to organize the defence of a trench and, with the assistance of his party, was successful in beating off a German counter-attack. During the fighting Lieut. Beaumont was wounded, but remained with his detachment, and with it returned to the 31st Battalion late in the day. For his very valuable services upon this occasion Lieut. Beaumont was awarded the Military Cross.

During the day both A and B Companies were ordered forward to replace companies of the 28th Battalion which had been sent up to reinforce the 27th and 29th Battalions. By 7.30 p.m. the men of A Company were again moved forward into close support of the 27th Battalion, and came under the orders of the officer in command of that unit.

Mention should be made of the valuable services rendered during this action by the Scout Section of the 31st Battalion. It was the business of these men to know thoroughly the area in which the unit was operating, and on this occasion their knowledge was utilized to the full. They acted as guides to carrying parties and to the companies going into and out of support, and carried out many other duties of a like nature.

On the night of August 22nd the Battalion was relieved, and the men moved back to the Noulette Wood huts. One man was killed and four were wounded by shell fire while going out. Two days later, on August 24th, the unit proceeded to the rest area near Estree Cauchie, a distance of eight miles. On the same day Lieut.-Col. Bell returned from Brigade and resumed command. At about this time notification was received from Brigade Headquarters to the effect that all leave was cancelled and that the sailings of the leave boat from Boulogne were suspended until further orders. Operations against the enemy on a large scale were impending.

On Monday, August 27th, the Brigade was inspected in fighting order at Estree Cauchie by the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. The Brigade was formed up on the parade ground in hollow square, each battalion on a two-company frontage, with twelve paces between the front and rear companies. The Commander-in-Chief received the general salute upon arrival, and immediately commenced the inspection. Accompanied by representatives of the various staffs of the Higher Command, he rode along the frontage of the leading companies and returned by way of the rear companies. Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen then called for three cheers for the Field-Marshal, which were given with full-throated heartiness. The Brigade then marched past the saluting base in double columns of fours, the 27th Battalion leading from the right, and the massed bands of the four battalions bringing up the rear.

On the same day, Lieuts. M. E. Merkley and A. E. Wall joined the 31st Battalion with 70 other ranks, to be followed next day by Lieuts. C. H. Irvine and N. Thompson.

Continued wet weather during the next few days interfered with the progress of training, but did not damp the keenness of the football enthusiasts, several matches being played in which the 31st Battalion did not do any too well. With the return of fine weather, however, intensive training was proceeded with, and good progress made.

Fifty picked marksmen of the Alberta Regiment practiced daily at the ranges in preparation for the Canadian Corps Rifle Meeting, scheduled to be held at Pernes on September 22nd, while the athletes of the Battalion were busy practicing for the Brigade

Sports. These were to be held on September 3rd, and were to decide the entries for the Divisional Sports. In addition four platoons, the best in each company, carried out musketry practice on the ranges for the elimination test of platoon marksmanship to decide which should represent the Battalion at the Corps Meeting. No. 11 Platoon, of C Company, proved itself the best in the Battalion and continued its special training while the others returned to normal duties.

The Brigade Sports were postponed for a week, and were not held until September 10th. The 31st Battalion came out with flying colours, winning eight events, being second in five and third in two. Pte. S. W. Miller, of C Company, won the 100 yards dash and the half mile, was second in the quarter mile and third in the 220 yards. Lieut. J. A. Cameron, of A Company, won the quarter mile and was second in the 220 yards. The high jump was won by Pte. C. W. Atkinson and the long jump by Pte. J. H. Robinson, both of D Company. Pte. J. A. Spencer, of B Company, was second in the obstacle race, and Pte. T. Polons, of A Company, took second place in the three-mile race and third in the mile. Pte. W. W. Kinsella ran second in the half mile, while the 31st Battalion team won both the 100 yards and one mile relay races. Truly a day of remarkable achievement for the men of Alberta; and, in the meantime, at Rebreuve, No. 11 Platoon, under Lieut. M. E. Patterson, had scored first in all competitions in the Brigade Inter-platoon Contest.

On September 11th, No. 11 Platoon took part in the Divisional Elimination Contest. Each brigade in the Division was represented by two platoons, the 6th Brigade contestants being from the 29th and 31st Battalions. The 31st Battalion, represented by No. 11 Platoon, took first place with a lead of 40 points and the 29th was second. When the successful competitors arrived back in their billets they were given a great ovation, the entire Battalion, headed by the band, going out to cheer them.

The days of rest, of training and of contests were now drawing to a close. In the strenuous and sometimes tragic days which were to come, the month of September was recalled by the men as an oasis in the bitter desert of destruction and strife; and the

memory of its sunny days, its sports and competitions and good comradeship lingered in their minds amid sterner events with something of wistfulness.

VII.

The 31st Battalion bade a temporary farewell to its training and rest area at 8.00 a.m. on Monday, September 17th, and, complete with transport, marched through Fresnicourt and Grand Servins to Villers Au Bois, where the men found comfortable billets in huts. Here severe and special training was carried out for a proposed attack against Sallaumines Hill, the second key to Lens. This operation, as a matter of fact, was never carried out; but the training in the tactics of attack, the bombing practice with live bombs and the hardening process of route marches which the men received were not wasted. In the near future, and at another place, they were to be fully utilized.

On September 21st No. 11 Platoon, with the picked rifle shots of the Battalion, proceeded to Pernes under the command of Lieut. M. E. Patterson to compete in the Canadian Corps Rifle Meeting. A few days later Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen called at Battalion Headquarters with the news that No. 11 Platoon had gained first place in the competition, beating the second team by no less than 72 points. This notable achievement stamped the victors as the best platoon in the whole of the Canadian Corps, and the Corps Shield passed into the keeping of the 31st Battalion.

The Divisional Sports were held on September 22nd in a field just outside the village of Villers Au Bois. Once again the 31st Battalion did well. Its team, consisting of Lieut. J. A. Cameron and Ptes. W. Kinsella, J. S. Bentley and S. M. Begley won the one-mile relay race, while Pte. S. W. Miller won his heats in the 100 yards, 220 yards and 440 yards races. Lieut. Cameron also won his heat in the 440 yards race, and Pte. W. Kinsella ran second in the half mile.

On the afternoon of the same day, the Battalion Scout Officer, Lieut. W. Langtry, and the Signalling Officer, Lieut. A. E. Metcalf, proceeded to the forward area to look over the positions which were to be occupied by the 31st Battalion. Other headquarters and company officers followed next day upon a similar mission.

Meanwhile, at Villers Au Bois, the men, having been provided with a German machine gun, were receiving instructions in how to manipulate it. The knowledge gained as a result of this instruction was to prove of great value later on.

On September 26th Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., returned from leave, and was ordered to assume temporary command of the 4th Brigade, Brig.-Gen. R. Rennie having broken his collar bone in a fall from his horse. During his absence from the Battalion, Major W. W. Piper was in command of the unit.

At 3.00 p.m. on the same day, the 31st Battalion commenced its march to the line. Two hours later a halt was made for nearly two and a half hours, during which supper was served to the men. As the line was approached the marching troops ran suddenly into artillery fire, where enemy batteries were searching the roads of the rearward area. One man was killed and four others were wounded in B Company as the result of a shell burst. A little while later the Battalion entered the line at the Mericourt-Avion Sector, the relief being completed by midnight.

The first day in the line proved quiet. Just after midnight of the 27th, however, two heavy bombardments of high-explosive shells and trench-mortar bombs were put down by the Germans on the Battalion front. Wire was destroyed and great gaps commenced to appear in the parapets, particularly upon the left flank, which was occupied by B Company. Under cover of the darkness and the clouds of dust thrown up by the bursting shells, enemy troops approached B Company lines. The men were ready, however, and engaged the attacking troops with rifle and Lewis-gun fire, beating them back with losses before they could reach the wire. When the excitement had died down it was found that seven men had been killed by the shell fire and that Lieut. T. G. Parry and thirteen other ranks had been wounded.

On the night of September 29th the Battalion went back into brigade support in La Folie Wood. Even in the rear the enemy artillery continued to be troublesome as his gunners searched the back areas with 5.9-inch high-explosive shells.

For three days the unit remained in support, and then, on October 2nd, marched out for Chamblain L'Abbe, a distance of over 15 kilometers. Hot tea was served en route, and it was not

until the early hours of the following morning that billets were reached.

Two days later the 31st Battalion, with its sister units of the 6th Brigade, moved to Villers Au Bois. At this period the command of the Battalion was temporarily taken over by Major C. D. McPherson, of the 28th Battalion, owing to the absence of Col. Bell at 4th Brigade Headquarters and Major W. W. Piper, who had proceeded to England to attend a course of instruction for commanding officers.

During the next few days little of note occurred. The weather was extremely cold and wet, rendering training difficult. October 8th and 9th were spent at Berthonval Farm where, in the rain and mud, such practice as was possible was carried out by the Lewis Gunners and the Battalion Grenadiers. The weather was still very unpleasant when, on October 10th, the Alberta Regiment relieved the 21st Battalion in the line at Chaudiere. Owing to the distance of the billets from the line, the men went up on the light railway as far as Vimy Ridge.

The trenches in the Chaudiere Sector were found to be in a deplorable condition. The heavy rains of the past week or two had converted the terrain into a waste of mud and water, which half filled the trenches. Parapet and parados were continually collapsing, and the men were kept employed in shovelling them back into place.

The Battalion had been in position less than two hours when, at 3.30 a.m., the enemy attempted to rush a bombing post on the left flank positions, held by D Company. The assault was unsuccessful, and the enemy were beaten off without difficulty by rifle and Lewis-gun fire.

As the days passed and the rain continued the state of the trenches grew steadily worse, and little could be done to prevent the walls from caving in. C Company, in the right sub-section, was singularly unfortunate, their sector being devoid of dugouts or shelter of any kind. The left and support companies were a little more fortunate, and had at their disposal a certain amount of weather-proof shelter. In addition to the continued rain, it was extremely cold, and the condition of the men's feet began to cause anxiety.

The Battalion, after an extremely uncomfortable tour, was relieved on October 13th, and proceeded to Neuville St. Vaast. Here the dugouts and shelters were weather-proof, and blankets were issued for the added comfort of the men.

VIII.

By this time the reputation of the Canadian Corps was firmly established. The dash and determination shown by the men of the Dominion on the Somme, at Vimy Ridge and in the fighting before Lens had singled them out as being among the finest troops on the Western Front. This enviable reputation, however, carried with it certain less enviable results. Whenever a particularly difficult, and therefore probably costly, operation had to be carried out, military formations with the best fighting qualities were selected by the Higher Command to shoulder the responsibility. During 1917 the Canadian Corps was chosen for a number of operations of this type. In these actions successes were attained and fame was achieved; but the price was paid in hardships and wounds and death.

Although fighting in the Lens area continued for some weeks, with the gain of further territory by the British, the attempt to force the defences of the town was abandoned after the fierce fighting of the latter part of August. The ground gained by the Canadians, particularly Hill 70, was of considerable value. It facilitated future operations against the German front at this point when the time for such operations was deemed ripe; and in the meantime it made Lens a much less secure and comfortable spot for its garrison. With the cessation of the attack's against the town, however, the time had come for the withdrawal of the Canadian Corps from this sector in order to prepare it for more arduous service than merely holding the territory which it had won.

On October 17th the 7th Battalion Worcester Regiment marched into Neuville St. Vaast and the 31st Battalion marched out. The latter proceeded to Zivy Siding, and there entrained on the light railway for Le Pendu Dump. Here the Battalion detrained and marched on to Villers Au Bois, which was reached in the early evening. On the following morning the march was resumed, the unit going by way of Camblain L'Abbe and Cambligneul to

Caucourt, reaching its destination at the last named place in the early afternoon.

The Battalion stayed at Caucourt for two days and on October 20th was inspected, with the rest of the Brigade, by the Army Commander, General Sir H. S. Horne, K.C.B. When this was done he addressed the officers in the centre of the parade ground. In the course of his remarks he thanked them for their loyalty and devotion to duty, and expressed his regrets that the Brigade was leaving his command.

At 2.30 p.m. on October 23rd, C Company of the 31st Battalion marched via Berthonsart to Savy, where the men remained until the 25th to supply working parties at railhead in preparation for the entraining of the Brigade. On October 24th the main body of the Battalion followed C Company. By 3:35 p.m. the entire unit had entrained at Savy, together with its transport, and the slow northward journey to Cassel had commenced.

Cassel was reached at 8:00 p.m., and an hour was occupied in unloading the transport. The Battalion then set out on the five-mile march to billets in the neighbourhood of Hondeghem. Coming at the end of a long and arduous day, the march through the cold darkness of the night, with clinging mud underfoot and the rain beating down incessantly, was a trying one, and it was after 11 o'clock before the billets were reached and the weary men were enabled to rest.

The 31st Battalion was now upon ground familiar to those few survivors who had been with the unit on its first arrival in France twenty-five months previously; for it was not far from here that the men of Alberta first heard from close at hand that thunder of artillery which had since become so familiar a feature of their lives.

On October 27th, the officers and some of the men of the Battalion proceeded to Poperinghe to study a model of the area allocated to the Canadian Corps in the projected operations against Passchendaele. Two days later the whole unit marched to Caestre, where the ground had been taped out by the Royal Engineers to represent the terrain over which the advance was to be made. Here the companies immediately commenced rehearsing the proposed attack. During the afternoon, while the Battalion,

in Brigade position, was taking its part in the rehearsal, General Sir H. C. O. Plumer, G.C.M.G., Commander of the Second Army, accompanied by Major-Gen. H. E. Burstall, C.B., the 2nd Divisional Commander, and Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen, of the 6th Brigade, arrived in the area and watched the proceedings. The reason of this interest was made manifest a few days later when it was announced that the 6th Brigade had been selected for the attack on the village of Passchendaele, and that the 31st Battalion was to have the post of honour in the centre of the Brigade front.

During the next few days, in mud and rain, the Brigade slipped, floundered and manoeuvred over the taped replica of the country and trench system in front of Passchendaele, and of the roads and houses of the village itself. The men were experienced, by this time, in the tactics required and were organized for this type of fighting; and it was not long before every platoon knew exactly what was expected of it.

On the night of November 2nd Lieuts. P. Hunter and A. S. Van Dusen reported for duty with the Battalion, and on the following day the Alberta Regiment moved off to take up position for the attack.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

Passchendaele

I.

While the British were still hammering the German defences along the front to the north and south of the River Scarpe, and the Canadian Corps was engaged at Fresnoy, preparations were already being made for another great offensive in which the troops of the Dominion were destined to play a part at least as glorious as any played by them throughout the war.

The Arras offensive was to be followed by another great thrust in the region of Ypres. It was essential, at this time, that the British should maintain heavy and continual pressure upon the enemy in order to divert reserves which were already being withdrawn from the Eastern Front, and prevent any serious concentration of hostile forces against the French. Time was essential to permit of the reorganization of the weakened and demoralized French divisions holding the line to the south, and this could only be gained by successive attacks on a large scale by the British forces.

The precariousness of the Allied positions in the Ypres Salient has been already described. In this region almost every point of vantage was held by the enemy, and its defence was both difficult and costly. It was, moreover, a vulnerable point in the British front; and, although several attempts by the Germans to break through had failed, an attack in sufficient force, delivered with sufficient determination and supported by adequate artillery would have been extremely difficult to repel.

The decision to launch an offensive in Flanders in the summer and autumn of 1917 has met with a great deal of adverse criticism. It must be admitted that its cost in men and in munitions proved to be out of all proportion to the results attained. Yet at the time it appeared to be the logical thing to do.

The British were compelled to attack; and to keep on attacking. By launching an offensive in Flanders it was hoped to strengthen the Allied positions in the neighbourhood of Ypres and thus remove a point of weakness in the line. Success in this region would also place the Allied armies in excellent position for the projected offensives of 1918. It must also be remembered that no foresight save that of a prophet could have predicted the abnormally wet weather, which did more to frustrate the entire fulfilment of the British battle plans than any action of the enemy.

The new offensive really commenced on June 7th, with the capture of Messines Ridge, although this is usually regarded as a separate action. This battle has been described as one of the best planned and most successfully executed operations of the whole war. Except for the devastation caused by the blowing of nineteen huge mines under the German positions on the ridge, the fighting was very similar, in its main features, to that at Vimy.

Messines Ridge is a commanding elevation some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length and running, roughly, north and south. It is situated almost due south of Ypres, its northern slopes being no more than four miles from that ancient Flemish city, and commanding the whole of the Salient. To the south the ridge overlooks Ploegsteert Wood, and all the flat country in the vicinity. In front of the ridge the German line formed a re-entrant in the British positions, and from the high ground the enemy obtained uninterrupted observation over the low country occupied by the Allies to the north, west and south. His guns could bring enfilading fire to bear upon the British lines in the Salient and also in the Ploegsteert Wood area.

Before any large-scale operations could be undertaken in this part of the front it was essential that the enemy should be driven out of his strong and powerfully held positions on the ridge. On May 24th the necessary operations commenced with an intensive bombardment of the village of Wytschaete. During the following days the bombardment increased in intensity and grew in depth and width until the whole front from Ypres to Armentieres was shaking with the thunder of the British guns.

At zero hour on June 7th nineteen huge mines containing a million pounds of ammonal were sprung under the German positions. The resulting explosions were terrific, and shook the

earth for miles around. The whole ridge erupted in flame and up-flung earth and debris, the devastation being literally beyond description. Then, under cover of a creeping barrage of great intensity, the attacking troops went over and through the demoralized enemy.

The assault was made by British, Australian and New Zealand troops on a front of nine miles, from Mount Sorrel in the north to Douve River. The whole of Messines Ridge was soon in British hands, and the advance was pushed forward beyond the eastern slopes. By nightfall the enemy positions had been penetrated to an average depth of well over a mile, and to a maximum depth of some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The salient in the German line had been entirely wiped out, and the new British front ran almost due south from Mount Sorrel. For a battle of such magnitude, the losses were slight, the total casualties — killed, wounded and missing — being about 16,000. Over 7,000 prisoners were taken, and enemy casualties in killed and wounded must have been exceedingly heavy.

II.

The capture of Messines Ridge cleared the way for further operations in Flanders, and on July 31st Sir Douglas Haig commenced that long series of offensives which has come to be known as the Third Battle of Ypres.

To describe the various phases of these protracted operations would occupy more space than is available, and only a brief general review is permissible. The campaign was well conceived and carefully planned, and might have developed into a success of major importance but for the weather.

In normal peace-time summers the low-lying plains around Ypres are never really dry. They are composed of a soft alluvial soil and are drained by many small streams. Here and there are lakes, ponds and patches of marshy land.

For two and a half years these plains to the east of Ypres had been the scene of continual fighting and had been subjected to an unusually heavy rainfall. The soil had been pulverized and pitted by millions of shell-bursts; craters had been formed, had silted up and had been reformed again; streams had been choked,

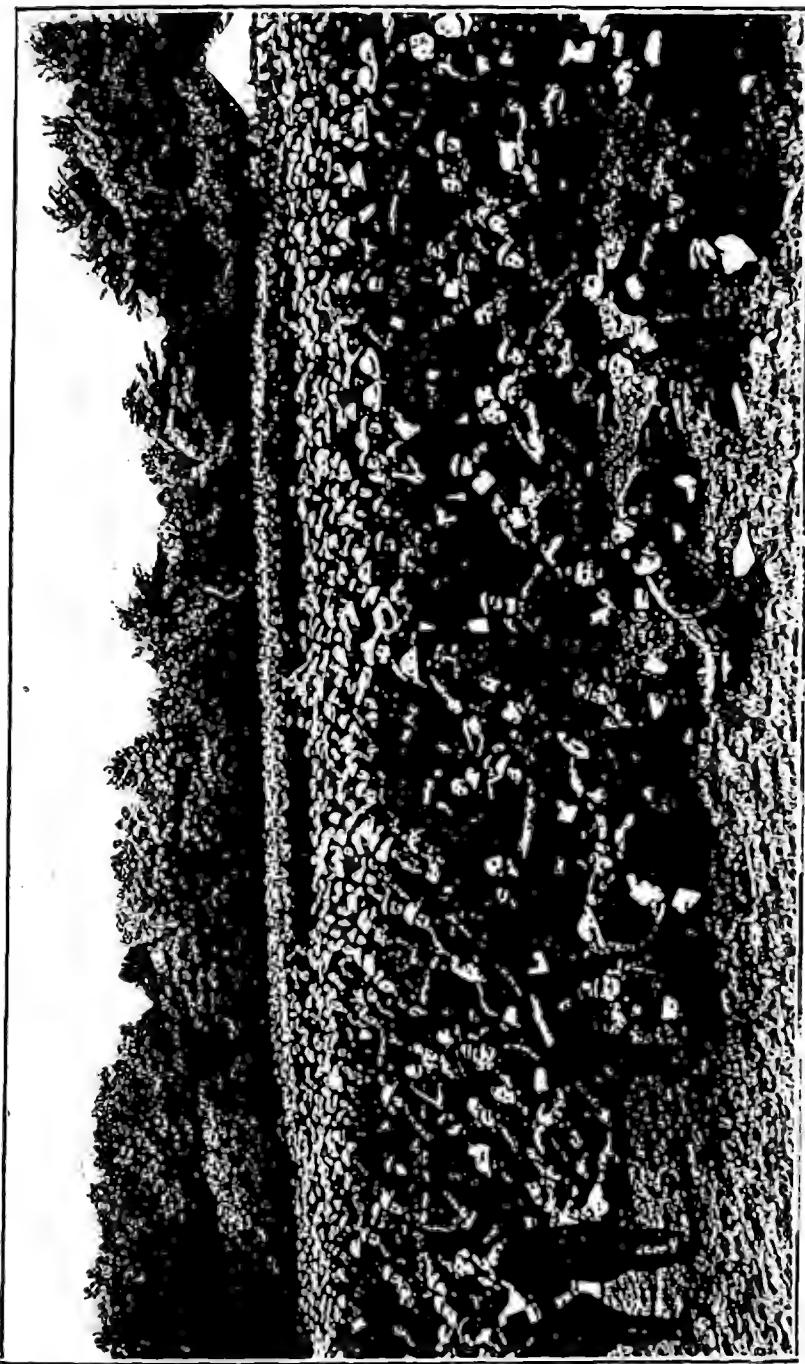
diverted and had overflowed into the surrounding country, changing bogs to quagmires and solid ground to bogs. In wet weather the whole terrain became a veritable sea of mud so deep in some places that men and pack animals and guns could be entirely submerged.

Had the rainfall during the late summer and autumn of 1917 been merely normal the conditions for the British troops operating in the area would have been had, but not impossible. Actually, however, the rainfall was abnormal, and this made the difficulties of the Allies almost insuperable. In the circumstances under which the operations were carried out the astounding feature is that any progress whatsoever was made.

The initial attack was delivered after an artillery bombardment of many days and of a severity never exceeded during the war. Zero hour was 3:50 a.m., on July 31st, the infantry assault being delivered on a front of fifteen miles from the River Lys opposite Deulemont southwards to beyond Steenstraat. Mud, in many places waist deep and in others so deep as to be impassable, hampered or stopped the advancing troops, but in spite of this good progress was made. By the end of the day the German line had been pushed back along the whole of the front attacked to an average distance of about a mile, 6,100 prisoners had been taken and over 25 field guns had been captured. St. Julien, a name deep graven in the annals of the 1st Canadian Division, had been retaken and the majority of the planned objectives seized.

On August 10th a further advance was made upon the village of Westhoek and the Westhoek Ridge, both of which were captured. Six days later the battle was again resumed with an attack upon a front of over nine miles north of the Ypres-Menin Road, which resulted in a further advance and the capture of the village of Langemarck.

During the early days of September there was a lull in the fighting, but on the 20th the British launched another large scale offensive on a front of eight miles athwart the Ypres-Menin Road. Furious fighting developed, attack and counter-attack alternating in rapid succession, with the British slowly but relentlessly pushing the Germans back. By the end of the first week in October, as a result of nearly ten weeks of bitter fighting and bloody carnage,



Sixth Brigade, Church Parade
(The attention of the troops is distracted by a dog-fight overhead.)



the British lines had been advanced an average distance of some two miles on a front of fifteen miles.

These meagre figures do not tell, however, the whole result of the fighting of 1917 in the Ypres area. Before the Battle of Messines Ridge the enemy had held practically all the high ground and every commanding elevation north of Mount Kemmel. By the end of the first week of October much of this valuable territory had passed into British possession. To the south of Ypres, Messines Ridge had been captured and consolidated; to the north the lower Pilken Ridge had been taken. Eastward the high ground in the neighbourhood of Gravenstafel, Polygon Wood and Observatory Ridge were in British hands. Only to the north-east, in the neighbourhood of Passchendaele, did the enemy still enjoy the occupation of important heights.

III.

By this time persistent rain and continual shelling had reduced every yard of the Salient to a condition almost indescribable. Men or pack animals, straying from the "duck walks," might be engulfed and drowned in silted-up craters, and many perished in this way. Almost everywhere on the lower levels the mud was at least waist deep. Guns, mired to their axles, were hauled into position by man and beast at the cost of titanic effort, and were worked in the open without the protection of gun pits or other defences; many of them became so hopelessly bogged that they were completely out of action, and some disappeared entirely in the mud. Ammunition had to be brought up by pack mules, the roads being too soft for heavy transport. It is safe to say that at no time during the war did the attacking forces have to contend with such adverse conditions.

In spite, however, of these enormous difficulties, the British Commander-in-Chief decided to persist with the attacks and to capture Passchendaele Ridge, should this be possible. In arriving at this decision Sir Douglas Haig was undoubtedly influenced by the plans of the French General Staff. At this time General Pétain had arranged an important operation on the Aisne, which was timed for the third week in October. It was necessary, therefore, for the British to maintain their pressure against the

enemy and thus prevent him from strengthening his forces in this area.

On October 9th a further attack was launched by combined British and French forces, known officially as the Battle of Poelcappelle. The front of attack stretched from St. Janshoek to Nieuwemolen, while a subsidiary operation was carried out in the neighbourhood of Reutel.

At first the attack progressed favourably, ground to a depth of some thousand yards being won slowly, but without serious opposition. Thereafter, however, the enemy put up a most determined resistance, and bitter fighting ensued which cost the advancing troops tremendous casualties. Painfully slow was the forward movement on account of the mud, and every yard of open ground was swept by hostile rifle and machine-gun fire and searched by shrapnel and high-explosive shell. The British barrage weakened as range increased, and at last the attack was halted by the line of German fortifications running from Poelcappelle south-eastwards to the crest of Passchendaele Ridge. Poelcappelle itself was captured, and Adler Farm, Wolf Farm, and Peter Pan House were among the strong points taken.

Three days later another attack was made on a six-mile front with the object of securing suitable jumping-off positions for the final assault upon Passchendaele Ridge, which was to be delivered by the Canadian Corps. In this attack Australian and New Zealand troops played a gallant part and paid a bitter price.

The British artillery barrage proved inadequate. Guns and munitions could not be brought forward in sufficient numbers and quantity. For this the conditions must be blamed, and not the personnel of the magnificent body of men who worked the guns. Nevertheless the infantry were left to struggle through the shell and bullet-swept mire without artillery support of sufficient intensity, and as a result the attacking troops failed to secure their objectives. Ground was gained, lost and regained in terrific and costly fighting. With desperate courage, and in face of heavy losses, the men of Australia and New Zealand strove to force a way out of the morass to the higher and firmer ground which was their goal. Again and again the attack was renewed, but the enemy defences could not be penetrated. Ground was gained, and in

some parts of the line the British positions were improved; but in the main the attack failed to achieve its ends.

IV.

Preparations to bring in the Canadian Corps for the last stage of the offensive — the capture of Passchendaele Ridge — were by this time far advanced. Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. W. Currie had made a very thorough examination of the whole situation, and had rightly concluded that to attempt to storm the Ridge with the artillery at that time in position would be to court costly failure. It is reported that, at the risk of loss of his command, if not of even more disastrous personal consequences, he flatly refused to order his men to the attack until adequate preparations had been made and ample artillery support provided. From this position he refused to budge and, to his lasting credit, he carried his point. A light railway was built forward and the necessary guns were in position when the Canadians attacked.

Before the middle of October the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions were on the road from the Vimy area to their new positions in front of Ypres, and by the 22nd of the month they were in the line. The 1st and 2nd Divisions followed a week later.

For some time representatives of the Canadian Corps had been at the Headquarters of the II Anzac Corps studying the situation. The latter had been fighting for weeks in the area in which the Dominion troops were to operate, and were thoroughly conversant with the conditions. By October 17th detailed maps and intelligence reports were issued to the various units of the Canadian Corps and six days later instructions for the forthcoming offensive were completed.

The attack on Passchendaele was planned in three stages which were known as Phases 6, 7 and 8 in the Second Army Scheme of the Battles of Ypres, 1917. Phases 6 and 7 were assigned to the 3rd and 4th Divisions, and Phase 8 to the 1st and 2nd Divisions. Phase 6, which involved the capture of the "Red Line," was timed to take place on October 26th. The succeeding phases, which involved the capture of the "Blue" and "Green" lines, were scheduled tentatively for October 30th and November 6th respectively. These dates were, of course, dependent upon the weather and the success of the earlier operations.

It should be noted that in this area the Germans had adopted a modified system of defensive works. Profiting by the lessons learned on the Somme and in front of Arras, the enemy no longer relied on the trench system as the main feature in the plan of resistance. Instead he depended upon depth of front to break up and disorganize attacking troops before they could reach the principal line of defence. It is true that trenches, protected by the usual heavy wire entanglements, were still employed in the forward areas where the nature of the ground was suitable; but these were really of subsidiary importance. Shell-proof concrete pill-boxes, barely showing above the earth's surface and armed with machine guns; fortified and organized shell holes similarly armed; block houses and isolated strong points: these in great numbers were dotted about the forward area in every suitable location, and formed the mainstay of the defensive system.

It was hoped, before the attack, that the heavy artillery, by an intensive barrage, would destroy most of these points of resistance before the infantry advanced, and would so shell-shock the garrisons of those which were not destroyed that they would not be able to offer serious resistance. In the actual event these hopes were only partially realized. Much damage was undoubtedly caused by the British high-explosive shells, and many pill-boxes were certainly destroyed; but a large number still remained intact after the bombardment. Every one of these, and each organized shell hole which had escaped destruction, formed a definite and formidable obstacle to the advancing infantry which had to be overcome as the men went forward.

V.

The Canadian attack against Passchendaele was to be launched upon a front of some 3,000 yards from the Zonnebeke Road to Wallemolen. The right flank of the line rested upon relatively high ground, which sloped gently down towards a small stream known as the Ravebeek. This stream, which formed the divisional boundary, had overflowed its banks, forming an impassable morass along the valley in the centre of the Canadian line, with stretches of deep and treacherous mud on either side. Towards the left flank the ground again rose slightly, but on its front lay the

swampy Woodland Plantation. Ahead the ground sloped gently upward to the ridge. The crossroads in Passchendaele Village lay some 2,500 yards eastward of the centre of the Canadian jumping-off positions, and about 80 feet higher.

The operations commenced at 5:40 a.m. on October 26th, when the whole Saliént, on a ten-mile front from Houlthoust Forest to Gheluvelt, woke to the thunder of thousands of guns. For two hours a terrific bombardment continued, wiping out trenches, demolishing advanced positions, destroying strong points and sweeping support areas and communications. Then the first wave of the Canadians went forward, with the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division on the right and the 8th and 9th Brigades of the 3rd Division on the left.

The men, for the most part, were wading knee deep, and in some places waist deep, in slime. Slowly they wallowed forward with a spirit which nothing could daunt. On the right the attack was a signal success, all objectives being carried in spite of some hard fighting. Heavy machine-gun fire from Crest Farm in front and Decoy Wood, on the right flank, took serious toll of the attacking troops, but failed to stay them. On the extreme right the advance was pushed forward to Decline Copse, while in the general attack Hillside Farm, Heine House and Augustus Wood were all captured.

On the left grim fighting developed. Skirting Marsh Bottom and the swamps of the Ravebeek, the troops went forward up the slopes of Bellevue Spur under sweeping machine-gun fire. For fourteen hours there was a hard and bitter struggle for the spur and for Laamkeek, on its southern slopes. When it ended the Canadians were victorious all along the line and in possession of all their objectives. This formidable position, bristling with machine guns and with its network of wire entanglements, redoubts and pill-boxes had defied for weeks the most determined efforts of British and Anzac troops. It fell at last before the Canadian assault.

During the ensuing hours heavy bombardments and determined counter-attacks were delivered against the new Canadian positions. They were unavailing. Not a yard of the captured territory could the enemy regain. His efforts to do so merely increased the tally of his casualties.

VI.

After the initial Canadian success the Salient was never silent. Day and night the guns of both sides flashed and thundered, further pulverising the tortured earth and flinging up great geysers of mud and water. Men lived and slept in mire and muck: the air was rank with dampness, the reek of mud, the stench of corruption and the acrid fumes of high explosives; rations tasted of mud and clothing was caked with it.

For a time the German airmen appeared to enjoy a predominance, and became very daring and troublesome. In broad daylight they would fly in squadrons low over the crowded roads of the rearward areas, bombing and machine-gunning infantry on the march, artillery and transport; at night the drone of their engines and the crash of their bombs could be heard almost continually.

In the advanced areas the days between the first and second attacks were marked by almost continual fighting. Subjected to intense shell fire and swept by machine-gun bullets the Canadians steadily strengthened and improved their positions, repulsing all counter-attacks and defying every effort to move them. On one or two occasions the enemy forced temporary and local withdrawals; but in every case the triumph was short lived, prompt counter-attacks bundling him back to his own lines.

On the morning of October 30th the attack was resumed. Once more the artillery — British, French and Canadian — opened up along a ten-mile front with every available gun; once more the line erupted in red flame and spouting mud and the stabbing flash of gun fire.

Again the 3rd Division went forward on the left with the 7th and 8th Brigades in the attack. On the right the 12th Brigade of the 4th Division advanced against Hallen Copse, Crest Farm and Tiber Copse. To the south of the Canadian line was the I. Anzac Corps and to the north the 63rd British Division, as in the previous attack.

Meetcheele on the north of the Ravebeek and Crest Farm on the south were the key points of the enemy position—the gates that guarded the inner Passchendaele defences. The former lay at the crest of the Bellevue Spur and the latter on a shoulder of Passchen-

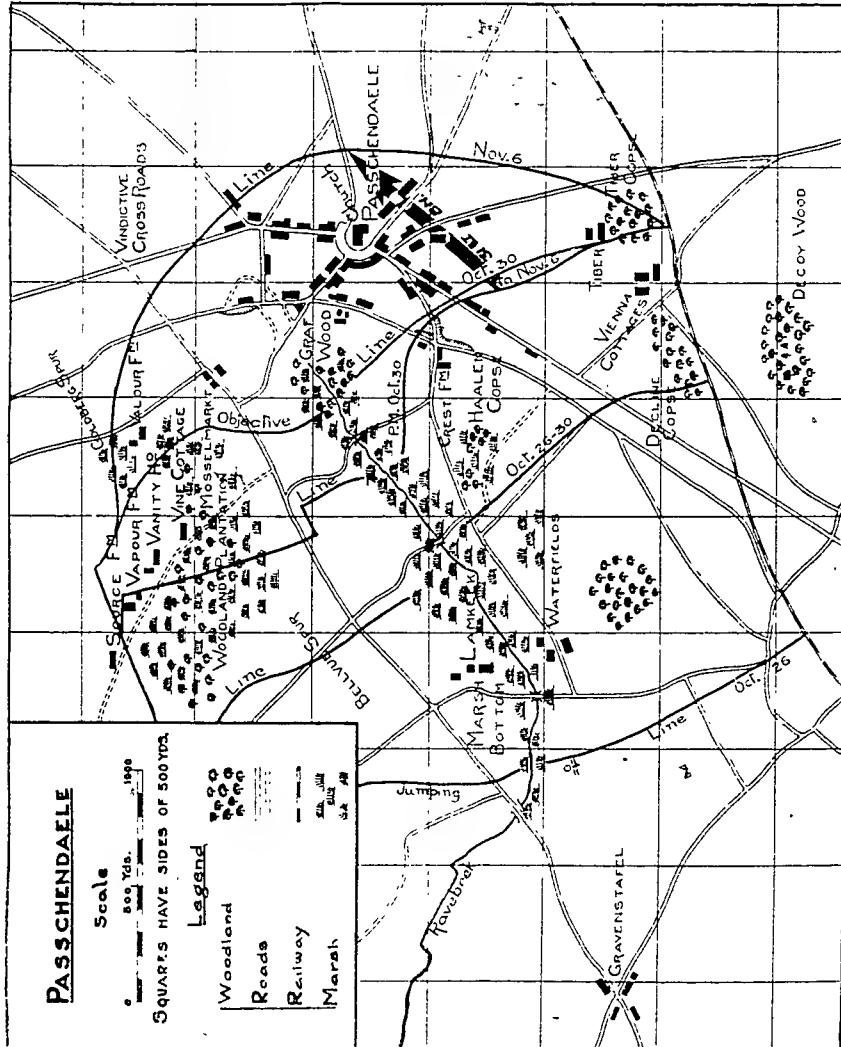
daele Ridge. Both points had to be captured before an advance up the valley to Passchendaele became feasible; both were strongly fortified, strongly held and difficult to approach.

The conditions under which the attack had to be made were atrocious. Throughout the night a cold drizzle had fallen persistently, drenching the men and adding to the muck and mire through which the advance had to be made. Wading through the mud, slipping into shell holes, now waist deep and now shoulder deep in silted-up craters, pulling one another out of swamp and morass, the attackers struggled slowly and laboriously forward. Machine guns swept them with a hail of death, shells burst amongst them, drowning them in fountains of mud, yet still they pushed onward and upward towards their objectives.

On the right Crest Farm was captured by 6.35 a.m., and shortly afterwards all the objectives of the 4th Division were in Canadian hands. On the left the advance was less rapid. The enemy were driven out of Source and Vapour Farms, and men of the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles secured a footing in Vanity House. Such was the terrain on their left flank, however, that the 63rd British Division could not get up, and they fought all through the day with one flank exposed and the swamp about them on every side. They were virtually isolated, and subjected to attack and constant bombardment; yet the survivors held on. Source and Vapour Farms were retained, and only the outposts at Vanity House were withdrawn. In the meantime the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry had added, at the cost of heavy casualties, to the lustre of its reputation by capturing Mcetcheele in the face of almost insuperable difficulties.

In spite of these successes, however, it was found impossible to reach the objective line on the left. In front of Goudberg Spur, near the left flank, impassable marsh was encountered which rendered frontal attack on this position hopeless. In this part of the line the advance was, as a consequence, held up some 500 yards short of its objective.

As a result of the first two Canadian attacks ground had been gained to an average depth of about 1,500 yards on a 3,000-yard frontage, the maximum advance being about 2,000 yards. At Crest Farm the Canadian line was no more than 500 yards from the Passchendaele cross-roads, and lay at about the same level. Other



points of the new frontage were still below the crest of the ridge, but on the left a lot of high ground, and a considerable portion of Woodland Plantation, had been captured.

During the next five days the whole area was subjected to heavy bombardment with gas, high-explosive shells and shrapnel, and the forward positions were swept again and again by intense machine-gun barrages. The inevitable counter-attacks were delivered with the greatest vigour and determination, and were beaten off. Magnificent support was afforded by the artillery, operating under the worst of conditions, and the enemy was getting at least as much as he was giving.

Such was the general situation when the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions, having magnificently played their part, gave place to the 1st and 2nd Divisions, and left to these veteran troops the completion of the task so well commenced.

VII.

On November 3rd the 2nd Division relieved the 4th Division on the right of the Canadian line, while the 1st Division went in on the left, the relief of the 3rd Division being completed by 11.00 a.m. on November 4th. Owing to the nature of the ground across the centre of the Canadian positions, which was quite impassable in the Ravebeek valley and to the south of Woodland Plantation, the operations were divided into two stages. Phase 8 was designed to include the high ground around Mosselmarkt and the village of Passchendaele. Phase 9, which was to be left for a later attack, provided for a further advance to the north-east, and the establishment of the line on the reverse slopes of the ridge.

The village of Passchendaele fell in the 2nd Divisional area. Zero hour was fixed for 6:00 a.m. on November 6th. The clearing of the ridge to the south was allocated to the 5th Brigade. The task of the 1st Division to the north involved the capture of the Goudberg Spur on the left flank and Mosselmarkt in the centre. Owing to the marsh in front of the spur, which had checked the advance during the previous attack, the assault was to be delivered along the south side of the ridge from Meetcheele to Mosselmarkt. Simultaneously a subsidiary attack was to be made from Vapour Farm and Vanity House against Vine Cottage. When the main

attack had reached its objective, an outpost line was to be established from Source Farm to Vanity House which would secure the Goudberg Spur.

To the left and right of the Canadian frontage the advance of the British and Australian divisions had practically ended, the final attack being left entirely in the hands of the Dominion troops, except for artillery support.

On the night of November 4th the 31st Battalion moved forward towards the assembly area, and relieved the 24th Battalion at Abraham Heights. By daylight the men were all in position in such poor shelter and protection as was available. During the day each company sent forward a party to reconnoitre the jumping-off line, and at dusk the first company moved forward to take up its position. At intervals of fifteen minutes the other companies followed. Battalion Headquarters was established in a pill-box at Hamburg, which was shared by the Headquarters Staff of the 27th Battalion. Messages from the front at Crest Farm to Battalion Headquarters were transmitted by lamp signals on account of the frequent interruption of telephone communication by the cutting of wires by hostile shell fire.

In taking up position, D Company unfortunately overstepped the assembly line and its bombers and scouts found themselves located in shell holes just in front of the enemy positions. As soon as this was realized the men were withdrawn; but in the meantime the Germans had discovered their presence and had bombed them severely, putting sixteen members of the Bombing Section out of action.

By shortly after midnight on November 5th everything was in readiness for the attack. Heavy artillery fire beat down upon the assembly positions, and caused some casualties, including Company Sergt.-Major Armstrong, of C Company, who was badly wounded. The men, sheltering in shell holes and such other cover as was available, held their positions, however, without any further betrayal of their presence to the enemy.

The dispositions for the attack were as follows: The 2nd Division had the 5th Brigade on the right and the 6th Brigade on the left, the latter forming the centre of the Canadian assault. The 1st Division had the 1st Brigade in the line, forming the left flank

of the attack. On the 6th Brigade front the 27th Battalion was on the right, the 31st in the centre and the 28th on the left, with the 29th Battalion held in reserve.

Zero hour approached. It was raining, and bitterly cold, but the order was passed along the line for the men to remove their great coats before going "over the top" and to leave them with the reserve platoons. This caused some grumbling among the shivering men, but in the sequel it proved of considerable advantage. The object of the order was to enable the troops to move more freely through the deep mud and among the craters, but it had yet another beneficial result. During the attack enemy airmen, observing the greatcoats laid out in orderly rows, mistook them for lines of troops waiting to advance, and signalled the position to their batteries. These opened fire on the great coats, and shells which might have been used against living men were thus diverted, lessening to some extent the severity of the enemy artillery fire upon the advancing troops.

At 6.00 a.m. a terrific barrage was opened up upon the enemy's advanced positions, where it rested for four minutes. Then it lifted to the next line on the barrage map, and the men of A Company of the 31st Battalion went forward in the van of the attack. It had two platoons in the first wave, one in the second to act as "moppers-up," and one in support.

Along the Passchendaele-Broodseinde Road the jumping-off line lay just short of the ruins of the outlying buildings of the village. Towards these ruins the men of A Company advanced through the first grey light of the November morning, keeping close up to the barrage. Almost immediately a deep slough was encountered, located directly in the line of attack. This compelled the company to split into two halves, one half going around the slough on the right and the other on the left. With the former went Lieuts. Scadden and Cameron, while Company Sergt.-Major R. Ferrie assumed leadership of the latter. Beyond the slough the two halves of the company reunited in the main street of the village, and proceeded with the work of clearing the enemy from their positions.

The Germans fought gallantly, and offered a strenuous resistance. Many of them had been wounded by the barrage, but held on grimly, with bandaged heads or limbs and faces deathly

white through loss of blood. Machine guns, bombs and bayonets all played their parts in the short but bitter struggle for the possession of the village. One after another the lurking places of the enemy in cellar or ruined cottage, in pill-box or shell hole, were attacked and their garrisons bombed out or forced to surrender. In one instance bombs were thrown and heavy rifle fire opened upon Lieut. Scadden and a party of his men of No. 4 Platoon, causing a number of casualties. With great gallantry the officer rushed the post, and bayoneted two of its defenders, the remainder then surrendering.

Further to the left heavy shell fire caught the men as they advanced upon the village over the open, marshy ground. All along the line machine guns from the flanks swept the ranks of A Company as they went forward. Men stumbled into shell holes and were helped out again by their comrades; others fell, dead or wounded, hit by shell-splinter, shrapnel or bullet. The deep slime made movement slow and very laborious. Yet still the advance pushed forward, and in front of the advance the line of the barrage still fell remorselessly. Right on the first objective an enemy post, protected by a rubble heap, poured down rifle fire upon the attacking troops; but the men would not be denied. With bomb and bayonet they rushed the enemy and, after a brief struggle, captured the post.

The first wave of the attack was now on its objective. The positions occupied by A Company lay on the higher land at the north-western outskirts of the village, where the ground was less muddy. Here the following waves of the attack passed through, and continued to press the advance, in the face of strenuous opposition, to the east and north-east. Meanwhile the men of A Company proceeded to consolidate the new position and to "mop up" the captured territory. A number of prisoners were taken, and sent back; but the victors were not left in unmolested possession of the ground they had taken. Heavy machine-gun fire was opened upon their positions, while enemy air craft, flying low, dropped bombs upon, or machine-gunned, every group of the attacking Canadian forces which they were successful in sighting. There were many casualties, and all morning and afternoon a steady stream of wounded limped or were carried back to the casualty clearing stations. Many of these were killed on their

way out, as the enemy had the range of the "duck-walk," and subjected it to a steady shelling.

Hardly had the men of A Company taken up position when Company Sergt.-Major Ferrie was hit and several men were killed or wounded by hostile machine-gun fire which swept the lines persistently from a strong point which had not yet been reached by the barrage. Lieut. Scadden went to the assistance of his senior N.C.O., and, while rendering first aid, was himself seriously wounded. Lieut. Cameron, realizing that the whole platoon would soon be wiped out, charged single handed through the covering barrage, which was at that time stationary, and, jumping into the post, bayoneted a man in the act of throwing a bomb. He then bayoneted several more of the enemy, forced twelve others to surrender, and captured the machine gun. Although wounded, he returned to resume command of his men, but was again wounded, and forced to go back to the rear. Lieut. Scadden was put upon a stretcher and two prisoners were detailed to carry him out. Unfortunately the shelling on the way was so severe that the bearers abandoned their burden and bolted for safety, leaving the wounded officer in the open, where he remained all night. Next morning he was discovered by two of the cooks of A Company, Ptes. McCartney and Bloar, who had volunteered to go up from Battalion Headquarters to look for him. His wounds, and the long night of exposure, proved too much for this gallant officer, however, and he died the following day.

Meanwhile, in spite of his wound, Company Sergt.-Major Ferrie assumed command of the survivors of A Company and proceeded with the consolidation of the new line. Later in the morning the Signalling Officer, Lieut. A. E. Metcalf, arrived and took over the command. In the meantime contact had been established with the battalions on either flank and the positions had been secured.

No sooner were the men of A Company on the first objective than B and D Companies passed through them on their way to the second. This involved the taking of the main line of resistance of the enemy, and the frontage of attack was increased to two platoons of D Company on the right and two of B Company on the left. Following and supporting the leading platoons were two others, one from each company, to do the "mopping-up." Lieut. N. Franks

led D Company and B Company was commanded by Lieut. H. Kennedy.

The forward movement of both companies was steady and well controlled. Immediately after passing through A Company's position, D Company came under severe enemy machine-gun fire from the houses and, in particular, from the basement of the church. The men attempted to rush the latter position from the cover of a hedge running up the right-hand side of the road leading to the church. The machine guns held them in check, however, and enemy shells beat down upon them remorselessly. Eventually the attackers were compelled to take shelter in shell holes, from which a steady rifle fire was poured on the entrances of the cellars and of the basement under the church. Under cover of this fire small parties worked round to the rear of the enemy and eventually bombed the occupants of the posts into surrendering.

From their positions under cover of hedges the enemy attempted to stay the advance by heavy rifle fire, which took its toll of the attacking ranks, but failed to stop them. A fusillade of rifle grenades drove the Germans from their positions and compelled them to take shelter in shell holes. From these the rifle fire was continued until the creeping barrage reached and crushed it.

On the right of the Battalion frontage three well-manned dugouts, two concrete pill-boxes and several organized shell holes swept the men with merciless machine-gun and rifle fire. In attempting to close in on these positions Lieut. H. G. Rogers and Lieut. G. T. Shaw were badly wounded. Individual section leaders showed considerable initiative, however, and posted men to shoot grenades and maintain rapid rifle fire upon the enemy posts. Under cover of this fire the positions were successfully rushed. During this skirmish two machine guns and 37 prisoners were captured, and other casualties were inflicted upon the enemy.

D Company had now captured its objective and, in spite of the fire of snipers, Lieut. N. Franks and Lieut. J. H. Gainor began the consolidation of the position and the process of linking up with the 27th Battalion on the right and B Company on the left. It was still raining, and the shell holes and fragmentary remains of trenches were full of water. Shell and small-arms fire beat down upon the position, and conditions were far from comfortable. The

light automatics were successfully sited, however, and immediately went into action to quell the activities of enemy snipers. Thus far everything had gone according to plan.

On the left B Company had also succeeded in reaching its objective. In doing so it had had severe opposition to overcome. Enemy aircraft, flying low over the attackers, sprayed them with machine-gun bullets, one machine in particular attacking again and again a party of wounded sheltering in a shell hole; yet with dogged determination the men went forward, overcoming the opposition with bullet and bayonet until they were nearing their objective. Here a line of pill-boxes halted the advance. One at a time Lieut. H. Kennedy dealt with these obstructions. By directing rifle and rifle-grenade fire upon the entrances of these structures he was able to suppress, in some measure, their activities while small parties moved up on the flanks. When within bombing distance these parties dashed in, hurling their grenades, and either killing the garrisons of the pill-boxes or driving them into the open. As soon as the last of these had been taken, B Company took over its objective, establishing contact with D Company on the right and the 28th Battalion on the left.

VIII.

By this time the village of Passchendaele was almost completely in Canadian hands, the line occupied by B and D Companies being beyond the crest of the ridge. Here the positions were exposed, and were subjected to heavy artillery fire. In addition to this enemy snipers and machine-gunners were extremely active all along the Battalion front and rendered any unguarded movement extremely dangerous.

The third objective, known as the "Green Line," had yet to be taken, and it was now C Company's turn to advance against the well-organized defensive positions of the enemy. Led by Major G. D. Powis, with two platoons in the first wave and two in the second, the men of C Company "leap frogged" the positions held by A Company and the line occupied by B and D Companies, and went forward to the attack.

The progress made was slow on account of the mud, and was harassed by the deadly shooting of enemy snipers. These were firing from well-concealed positions on the forward slope of the

led D Company and B Company was commanded by Lieut. H. Kennedy.

The forward movement of both companies was steady and well controlled. Immediately after passing through A Company's position, D Company came under severe enemy machine-gun fire from the houses and, in particular, from the basement of the church. The men attempted to rush the latter position from the cover of a hedge running up the right-hand side of the road leading to the church. The machine guns held them in check, however, and enemy shells beat down upon them remorselessly. Eventually the attackers were compelled to take shelter in shell holes, from which a steady rifle fire was poured on the entrances of the cellars and of the basement under the church. Under cover of this fire small parties worked round to the rear of the enemy and eventually bombed the occupants of the posts into surrendering.

From their positions under cover of hedges the enemy attempted to stay the advance by heavy rifle fire, which took its toll of the attacking ranks, but failed to stop them. A fusillade of rifle grenades drove the Germans from their positions and compelled them to take shelter in shell holes. From these the rifle fire was continued until the creeping barrage reached and crushed it.

On the right of the Battalion frontage three well-manned dugouts, two concrete pill-boxes and several organized shell holes swept the men with merciless machine-gun and rifle fire. In attempting to close in on these positions Lieut. H. G. Rogers and Lieut. G. T. Shaw were badly wounded. Individual section leaders showed considerable initiative, however, and posted men to shoot grenades and maintain rapid rifle fire upon the enemy posts. Under cover of this fire the positions were successfully rushed. During this skirmish two machine guns and 37 prisoners were captured, and other casualties were inflicted upon the enemy.

D Company had now captured its objective and, in spite of the fire of snipers, Lieut. N. Franks and Lieut. J. H. Gainor began the consolidation of the position and the process of linking up with the 27th Battalion on the right and B Company on the left. It was still raining, and the shell holes and fragmentary remains of trenches were full of water. Shell and small-arms fire beat down upon the position, and conditions were far from comfortable. The

light automatics were successfully sited, however, and immediately went into action to quell the activities of enemy snipers. Thus far everything had gone according to plan.

On the left B Company had also succeeded in reaching its objective. In doing so it had had severe opposition to overcome. Enemy aircraft, flying low over the attackers, sprayed them with machine-gun bullets, one machine in particular attacking again and again a party of wounded sheltering in a shell hole; yet with dogged determination the men went forward, overcoming the opposition with bullet and bayonet until they were nearing their objective. Here a line of pill-boxes halted the advance. One at a time Lieut. H. Kennedy dealt with these obstructions. By directing rifle and rifle-grenade fire upon the entrances of these structures he was able to suppress, in some measure, their activities while small parties moved up on the flanks. When within bombing distance these parties dashed in, hurling their grenades, and either killing the garrisons of the pill-boxes or driving them into the open. As soon as the last of these had been taken, B Company took over its objective, establishing contact with D Company on the right and the 28th Battalion on the left.

VIII.

By this time the village of Passchendaele was almost completely in Canadian hands, the line occupied by B and D Companies being beyond the crest of the ridge. Here the positions were exposed, and were subjected to heavy artillery fire. In addition to this enemy snipers and machine-gunners were extremely active all along the Battalion front and rendered any unguarded movement extremely dangerous.

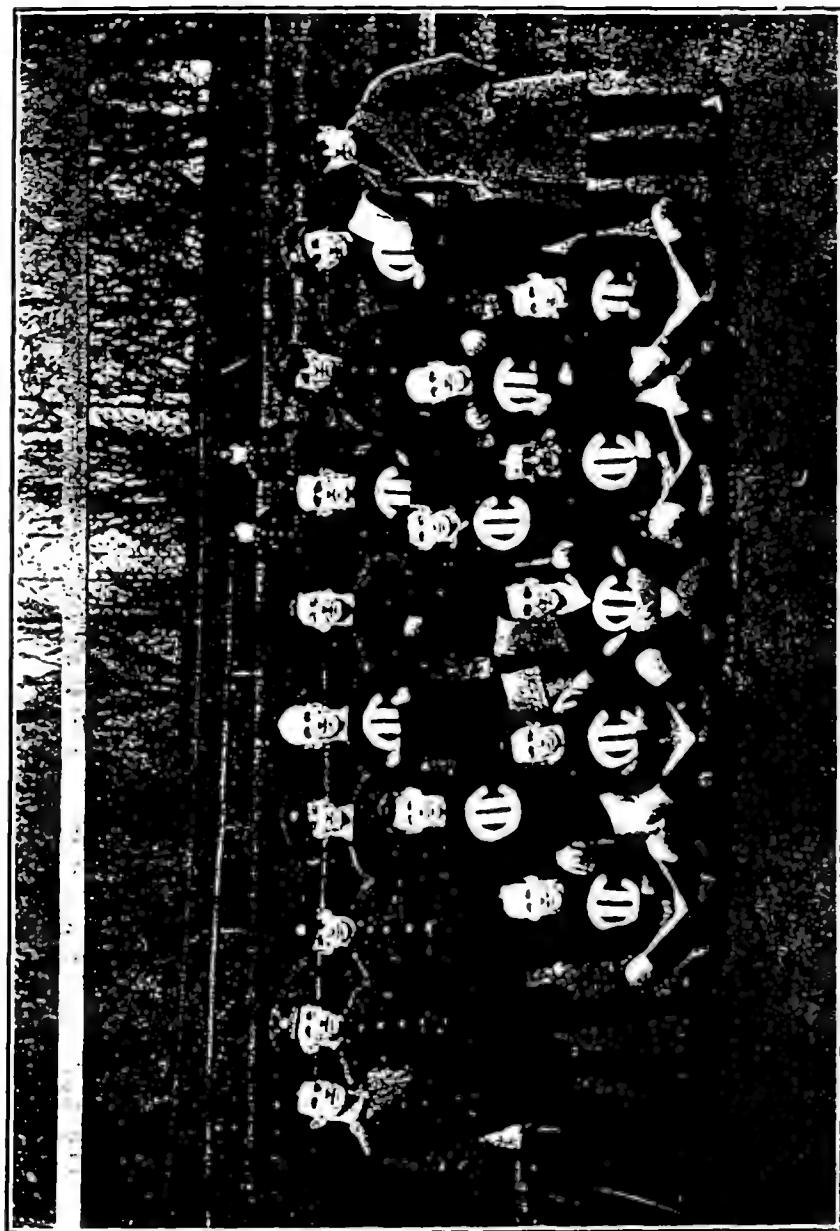
The third objective, known as the "Green Line," had yet to be taken, and it was now C Company's turn to advance against the well-organized defensive positions of the enemy. Led by Major G. D. Powis, with two platoons in the first wave and two in the second, the men of C Company "leap frogged" the positions held by A Company and the line occupied by B and D Companies, and went forward to the attack.

The progress made was slow on account of the mud, and was harassed by the deadly shooting of enemy snipers. These were firing from well-concealed positions on the forward slope of the

ridge, and from a slight rise in the ground a little further on, and caused heavy casualties. By a series of rushes from shell hole to shell hole the men attempted to get forward. In one such rush Lieut. H. A. Barker was shot dead. A little later Lieut. M. E. Patterson was severely wounded in an effort to get his men forward through a swamp to the shelter of a hedge, which was found subsequently to exist only on a map. Minute by minute the casualties among the N.C.O.'s and men continued to mount up. On the Company's left flank two pill-boxes checked the advance and swept the exposed frontage with their machine guns.

Under these circumstances Major Powis asked for the co-operation of Lieut. H. Kennedy, who was in command of the combined B and D Company line. It was arranged that the left flank of D Company should cover the approach of the men of C Company upon the menacing pill-boxes, the latter working along the right flank and taking the posts from the rear. Having completed the planning of the proposed operation, Lieut. Kennedy returned to B Company's position and Major Powis went forward to join his men. Here he began to make his final dispositions and, while doing so, was shot through the forehead by a sniper and died almost immediately. At about the same time Lieut. E. S. Brett, the only remaining platoon officer, became a casualty. Sergt. M. Rowden and Sergt. A. McCormick were now left in command of the Company. They immediately dispatched a runner to Lieut. Kennedy advising him of the situation, and commenced consolidating the position and establishing posts for the Lewis guns.

Meanwhile Lieut. Kennedy had covered, by controlled fire, the entrances of the two pill-boxes. B Company had completed, by this time, the consolidation of its position and was in readiness to meet a counter-attack should one develop. D Company, in addition to maintaining fire on the pill-boxes, was engaged in beating down the fire of enemy snipers. At this juncture the runner from C Company brought in the message that Major Powis had been killed and that the Company was without a commissioned officer. Lieut. Kennedy immediately went forward and sent Lieut. R. W. Buchanan, one of his platoon commanders, to carry on with C Company in its task of establishing posts on the right flank and getting forward to the objective.



31st Battalion football team after winning Corps Championship at Brussels,
Belgium, 1919.



The fire on the two pill-boxes was steadily continued. Lieut. Kennedy decided that, although they were in advance of his position, he would endeavour to capture these posts. Instructing his men to maintain their fire upon the approaches, the officer, accompanied by the Sergt.-Major of B Company, worked his way forward through the water-logged shell holes. In spite of enemy snipers, the two men were successful in getting to within bombing distance of the pill-boxes. Then, waiting for a suitable opportunity, they rushed to the rear of the defensive position and captured it. With it they also captured three officers and 34 other ranks, two machine guns, a signalling apparatus and a quantity of kits and other stores.

With the capture of these two pill-boxes the last serious obstacle between C Company and its objective was overcome. There were two other posts on this flank, but they were inactive and could be ignored for the time being. Meanwhile the Battalion snipers, with a good field of fire from the forward positions, were doing effective work while the process of consolidation progressed.

In the early afternoon Capt. W. Jewitt arrived from Battalion Headquarters and assumed command of C Company. Immediately steps were taken to deal with the two posts which still remained in the enemy's hands. One of them put up a half-hearted fight, but at about 3.00 p.m. it surrendered and two officers and six other ranks came out voluntarily and gave themselves up. The final post had still to be taken, and Capt. Jewitt and Lieut. Kennedy set out upon the hazardous task. Over an area knee deep in mud and exposed to the fire of enemy snipers they crawled slowly and laboriously, taking advantage of every bit of cover the ground afforded. At last they got to within striking distance, and rushed the post. They met with no opposition from the garrison, and six officers and six other ranks were captured. Two of the officers were Battalion Commanders, one of a Bavarian unit and the other of the 10th Prussian Grenadier Guards, while two others were the Adjutants of these units. It appeared that the Bavarian Battalion was in support, and had been assigned the duty of making an immediate counter-attack, and that its Officer Commanding and his Adjutant had been forward in the front line to reconnoitre when the 31st Battalion attacked.

The capture of these defences entirely disposed of the enemy in the area close to the Battalion frontage. A line of advance posts was established covering the main line of resistance, which had been dug by A Company. By evening the new line was firmly established on the eastern outskirts of Passchendaele, with a well constituted trench system along the whole Brigade frontage.

IX.

The 28th Battalion, on the left of the 31st, had been equally successful in its attack. From its assembly position within 150 yards of the German line the men had waded forward upon the lifting of the barrage and carried the first defences with the bayonet. From that point, however, progress was slow. Hard fighting developed, especially around the pill-boxes, the approaches to which were in places waist deep in mud. One by one, however, these posts were subdued by methods similar to those employed by the 31st Battalion, and eventually the whole of the objective was secured. Meanwhile the 27th Battalion, attacking on the right of the 31st, had gone forward in the face of extremely heavy machine-gun opposition, and had gained its objective, at the cost of heavy casualties, by 7.35 a.m.

On the extreme right of the Canadian line the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade had worked its way along the ridge to timetable, and seized its objective. By 9.00 a.m., the 26th Battalion had beaten off the only counter-attack attempted by the enemy that day. The machine-gun support was most efficient during the repulse of this attack, and it is reported that the flare of the S.O.S. signal had not reached the ground on its downward flight before every gun was in action.

The 1st Brigade of the 1st Division, operating on the left of the 6th Brigade, succeeded in surprising the enemy at Mosselmarkt, and quickly subdued the post. In the subsequent attack, however, stubborn resistance was met with and hard fighting took place. The enemy, in the strongly-fortified post at Vine Cottage, held up the attack for some time before the position could be taken, and made the assaulting troops pay the price of numerous casualties for their success.

By the night of November 6th Phase 8 of the offensive had been completed. Every objective of the Canadian Corps had been captured and consolidated. The ground had been cleared for the last phase of the attack.

In the face of great difficulty the troops of the Dominion had again done that which they had set out to do. Through mud which made every movement slow and arduous; through a constant barrage of shell which blew men to bits or deluged them under cascades of mud and water; through machine-gun and rifle fire and the attacks of hostile aircraft the Canadians had pressed on undaunted and, with bomb, bullet and bayonet, had driven the enemy before them all along the front.

After the action great difficulty was experienced in evacuating the wounded and in bringing up ammunition and supplies. The enemy artillery maintained a heavy fire upon front-line and rearward positions, and the condition of the terrain to be traversed was indescribable. To step from the slippery "duck walks" was to risk being engulfed in a silted-up shell hole, and some of the missing undoubtedly perished in this way. Throughout the day of November 7th, however, the work of taking out the wounded was proceeded with, and by nightfall the battlefield was cleared.

On the same day a strong defensive outpost was established by the 31st Battalion at Vindictive Cross Roads, to the north of Passchendaele. Communication between Battalion Headquarters and the line was maintained solely by runners, the Lucas lamp proving unsatisfactory on account of the smoke from the constant shell-bursts. A major portion of this duty fell to the lot of the Scout Section, which, as a result, was heavily overtaxed and suffered considerably in respect to casualties. It was some time before new men were sufficiently trained to fill the vacancies caused by the scouts who fell in this action.

On the night of November 7th the 31st Battalion was relieved by elements of the 22nd French Canadian Battalion, and bivouaced for the night in the Potijze area at Hussar Camp. For the men of Alberta the Battle of Mud and Blood had ended.

To the 31st Battalion had fallen the honour of attacking in the centre of the "Iron Sixth" Brigade and of capturing the village of Passchendaele—the final objective of months of fighting

in which British, French, Australian, New Zealand and, finally, Canadian troops had participated. For this honour it paid the price of 290 casualties — 18 officers and 272 other ranks. Among those killed in action were Major G. D. Powis and Lieuts. H. A. Baker and M. E. Merkley. Lieut. C. M. Scadden died later of wounds received in this action. Of the N.C.O.'s and men, 53 were killed, 206 were wounded and 13 were missing — probably drowned in shell holes. On the following day, November 8th, the toll of casualties was further increased when the Transport Officer, Lieut. S. M. McNally and the Signalling Officer, Lieut. A. E. Metcalf, M.C., were killed by a bomb dropped from an aeroplane. Three other officers and five men were wounded by the same bomb.

During the action severe casualties had been inflicted upon the enemy, although the number of dead and wounded could only be estimated. The number of prisoners sent back by the Battalion exceeded 90, while four machine guns and a quantity of valuable stores were taken.

No account of the part played by the 31st Battalion in the Battle of Passchendaele would be complete without a reference to the splendid work done by Capt. McGill, the Battalion Medical Officer, and his orderlies of the C.A.M.C. Under the most difficult of conditions, and the fire of enemy long-range guns, the Medical Officer and his staff worked with indefatigable endurance and efficient skill at their task of alleviating the sufferings of the continual stream of wounded which flowed back from the fighting lines.

On November 8th four officer reinforcements — Lieuts. W. W. Windle, D. Murray, F. G. Parker and E. A. C. Herbert — reported for duty and were posted to their companies. On the following day, amid the bustle and confusion of reorganization, cleaning up and checking shortages, the Corps Commander visited the lines of the 31st Battalion, and was followed a little later by Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen. The latter addressed a few brief remarks to the officers and men, thanking them for their loyalty and devotion to duty, and praising them for the manner in which they had carried out the tasks allotted to them.

At 6.30 a.m., on November 10th, the Battalion entrained for Caestre, from which point it marched to its old billets in the Hondeghem area. It had seen its last of the mud of Ypres.

X.

At Passchendaele the final phase of the Canadian attack in Flanders was launched on November 10th. The main attack was delivered by the 1st Canadian Division, with one battalion of the 2nd Division co-operating on the right and troops of the 1st British Division on the left. The thrust was delivered in a north-easterly direction from Valour Farm to a point just north of Passchendaele. It was completely successful, all objectives being gained and the line consolidated.

As a result of the Canadian operations at Passchendaele the British line had been advanced for a distance of some 3,000 yards. All the high ground in the vicinity had been captured, and a great salient had been driven into the enemy positions. In addition to all this the repeated Canadian successes had badly shaken the morale of the German troops. With all the conditions in their favour, the picked fighting men of the Central Powers had again and again been forced to accept defeat at the hands of the once-despised amateurs from beyond the Atlantic.

In three weeks the Canadians had fought four battles and had repulsed over two dozen counter-attacks. They had taken 1,174 prisoners, including two battalion commanders, and had captured a number of machine guns and much war material. The total casualties from October 21st to November 15th numbered 12,404 of all ranks, or approximately one quarter of the total infantry strength before the commencement of the operations. The officer casualties were particularly heavy, amounting to 135 killed, 417 wounded and 10 missing, while of the other ranks 2,153 had been killed, 9,004 had been wounded and no less than 687 were missing. Since the enemy had few opportunities of making prisoners, it is more than probable that most of the missing men had found their last resting place under the mud and slime of bog and shell hole. The Victoria Cross was awarded to nine members of the Canadian Corps for acts of gallantry during the Passchendaele offensive.

Tribute must be paid to the Canadian artillery for the part it played throughout the operations. Guns, standing axle deep in mud and without protection, were vigorously and efficiently operated by men wallowing waist-deep in slime. As the advance progressed the artillery was brought forward to new positions foot

by foot, at the cost of immense labour. Every one of the vast number of shells fired by the forward batteries had to be brought up by pack mule and handled by human labour under conditions of the utmost difficulty. Yet whether it was putting down a barrage for the infantry, bombarding the enemy positions or engaged in counter-battery work the artillery never failed. But for the indefatigable gunners all the gallantry and determination of the infantry might have been unavailing.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

The Last Winter

I.

With the close of the Flanders offensive the summer campaigns of 1917 came to an end. Already the fighting had dragged on far into the autumn, adding to the difficulties and hardships of the attacking forces. Yet in this year the advent of winter did not bring to the Western Front its customary monotony. The war was nearing its end, and already events were marching relentlessly towards the dramatic final acts of the great struggle and its stirring climax.

To the veteran fighting man war had come to be regarded, by this time, as a permanent institution. The period before the war had become, to him, vague and unreal, like the memory of some other existence; the days of peace, which he realized must return sooner or later, he found difficulty in visualizing. For three years, each longer by far in its living than a peace-time year, the war had been his life, and imagination boggled at the thought of any other kind of existence. For three years he had lived in mud, or among dust and flies (depending on the season), with rats for bed-fellows and lice as lodgers; for half his time he had lived the life of a troglodyte and for the other half the existence of an overworked labourer; he was never really clear of danger and was often literally face-to-face with sudden death. The whole fabric of his being was so far removed from that of normal peace time that the latter seemed a fantastic unreality and the war alone seemed stable and real.

In peace time man plans for and thinks and talks of next year or of a time, possibly, a decade ahead. In war his forward thinking seldom goes beyond the next issue of rum, the next rest period or the possibilities of leave; and ambition is limited to securing a not-too-serious "Blighty." The whole mental attitude

of the fighting man towards life and death is entirely different from that of the civilian, and perhaps few who took no part in the war can realize the depth and width of the gulf that separates the two.

Among the men in the trenches there were few who realized in this month of November, 1917, that within a year the thunder of the guns would be silenced. Yet there were signs during the winter that the war could not much longer endure.

In Germany the effects of the British blockade were rapidly becoming acute. There was already a shortage of essential food-stuffs, and the civil population had to put up with a diet which bordered on semi-starvation. Even the men in the trenches were under nourished; and, as time went on, the available food supplies were bound to undergo a further diminution. Imports were impossible, except from a few small neutral countries, and the removal of every available man from agriculture to the fighting forces had seriously disorganized home production.

The enemy was also beginning to experience serious difficulty in obtaining adequate supplies of certain materials necessary for the production of munitions, notably fats, cotton, copper and nickel. Although not yet at the end of his resources, the end was in sight; and when that end was reached the end of the war would follow.

Finally civil unrest and discontent had raised its ominous head in Germany during the autumn of 1917, due probably to under feeding and war-weariness. On January 30th, 1918, this unrest culminated in a great strike which, originating in Berlin, spread throughout the country.

It was clear that Germany could not fight on very much longer.

There were signs of war-weariness in Britain, also, and in France. In England there were several serious strikes in essential industries which were settled, as a rule, by the complete capitulation of the Government to the demands of the workers. The food situation, although less serious than in Germany, was a source of anxiety. The U-Boats had taken serious toll of both British and neutral shipping, and a huge number of bottoms were employed in the transportation of troops, munitions and supplies to the scattered theatres of war in which British troops were operating. As a result the tonnage available for conveying foodstuffs to British

ports was limited. At no time was there danger of actual famine; but to conserve the available supplies a scheme of rationing was introduced on February 8th, 1918, in respect to meat. This was extended on February 25th to include butter and margarine. Sugar was already rationed and the supplies of alcoholic beverages available to the public were rigidly controlled as regards both quantity and quality. Leave in London was a much less hilarious event in 1918 than it had been three years earlier. The meals served in restaurants were frugal, drinks were expensive, poor in quality and hard to come by and the "show" you had been looking forward to seeing for weeks would more than likely be interrupted by an air raid.

II.

Although heavy fighting was resumed on the British front at Cambrai on November 20th, 1917, the Canadian Corps, upon leaving Flanders, returned for a time to the routine of trench warfare as waged on the Western Front in winter. Moving southward from Ypres it took over its old positions in the vicinity of Vimy.

The 31st Battalion left its billets at Hondeghem on November 11th and proceeded by easy stages to the Neuville St. Vaast area. The route lay via Robeq, Auchel, Camblain L'Abbe and Mont St. Eloy, and for the first time since its arrival in France the Battalion made the journey by motor busses taken from the streets of London. The unit reached its destination on November 14th, and took over comfortable billets in Cellars Camp from the 8th Worcesters.

Early on the following morning Lieuts. A. W. Bannard, W. H. Williams, W. T. Bannan, E. L. Scott and W. Harris, with a draft of 124 other ranks, reported for duty with the Battalion. Over 50 per cent. of the men were returned casualties, and as such were doubly welcome to their comrades.

On November 16th the men had a bath — the first for five weeks — and on the afternoon of the next day proceeded forward to take over the line in the Mericourt Sector from the 8th Warwicks. Here the trenches were deep and in exceptionally good condition, and it was possible to serve hot meals three times a day. The cooking was done in the Mont Foret Quarries, where Battalion Headquarters was located, and the food was carried up to the line in food containers. Rations from the rear were brought up in small

trucks by man power to the quarries, from which point they were carried forward to the line by parties provided by the supporting companies. Unfortunately the roads forward were very muddy, and were pitted with deep shell holes; and on one occasion two of the men of a ration party fell from the "duck walk" and were smothered in the mud of a crater.

After a quiet tour the 31st Battalion returned to Cellars Camp on November 22nd. Three days later the Chaplain, Capt. E. Appleyard, preached his farewell sermon before leaving to take up a parish appointment in Canada. Capt. Appleyard's departure was a source of regret to both officers and men, as he had won the liking and respect of all ranks. He was superseded as Chaplain by Honourary-Capt. B. L. Whittaker.

Another officer the departure of whom caused deep regret at this time was Capt. W. H. McGill, the Battalion Medical Officer. In every action, Capt. McGill had rendered splendid service, and many a casualty had to thank him for his care and devotion to duty. At no time had he spared himself or turned aside from danger; and every attack had meant for him long hours of unremitting work, often under the worst of possible conditions. His duties were taken over by Capt. W. L. Muir.

The 31st Battalion, with its sister units of the Canadian Corps, had settled down, by this time, to the routine of holding the line. Comparatively speaking, the situation in which the Dominion troops found themselves was not unpleasant. The positions occupied were strong, and in good condition to meet attacks should the enemy decide upon an aggressive movement; the majority of the trenches were deep and the accommodation in the line roomy; in the support and rearward areas the billets and shelters available were, for the most part, comfortable. There was, of course, the omnipresent mud, which, in wet weather, became extremely bad in some parts of the line; there was plenty of rain and snow and cold weather to test the hardihood of the men; there were artillery bombardments to be endured, and occasional raids to be repelled; but, on the whole, the sector occupied by the Canadians was quiet and by no means the worst on the Western Front.

There was plenty of work to be done. In the forward area much patrolling had to be carried out and a great deal of new wire was put down; repairs to trenches were a recurring source of

labour, and, in some parts of the line, positions were extended and improved. In the support and rest areas the jobs were many and varied, the 31st Battalion providing working parties for such operations as improving billets and finishing partially-completed huts, repairing and building roads, putting in water mains to the forward area, wiring support lines, constructing support trenches and strong points, and other jobs of a like nature. On several occasions practically all the men of the Battalion were out on working parties scattered widely throughout the Canadian area and billeted with other units.

While out of the line training was continued whenever the weather and the demands for working parties permitted. Concerts and entertainments were organized, some of them on a surprisingly elaborate scale, band performances were given and the various canteens catered to the comfort and amusement of the men. Educational facilities, of which the men availed themselves in considerable numbers, were provided by the Chaplain Services, lectures on a wide range of subjects being given and libraries established. There were the usual inspections, the occasional and welcome bathing parade and, on Sundays, church parades.

Throughout the winter the Canadian Corps remained in its positions around Lens and Vimy Ridge. The various units carried on the usual routine of front line, support, reserve and rest without the interruption of any events of magnitude. The 31st Battalion made its home at Cellars and Hill Camps, near Neuville St. Vaast, and held the line in the Mericourt, Chaudier and Avion sectors. From December 22nd to January 18th, the unit was stationed for training near St. Hilaire, where the men were comfortably billeted in barns and other farm buildings.

IV.

Thus passed the winter of 1917 - 1918 — the last winter of the war, and the last lull before the bursting of the fierce final battles which preluded the abject surrender of a beaten foe.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to give the day-to-day story of the 31st Battalion during these winter months. Its first tour in the line has already been touched upon. This was followed by a period during which most of the men were detailed as working parties.

Towards the end of November, while Major C. H. Westmore was in temporary command of the unit, Lieuts. P. S. Murray, W. H. Grady, J. E. Knott, J. O'Hara, R. O. Edgar and A. D. Jukes reported for duty and were posted to the various companies.

On December 3rd polling commenced in connection with the Dominion of Canada elections. All ranks were entitled to vote, and Battalion and Company Headquarters were converted into polling stations. One of the major issues of the election was the question of conscription in Canada; it was a question, moreover, of vital importance to the men at the Front, and one upon which feeling was strong. As a result, a heavy military vote was cast. Some fifteen days later it was announced, to the jubilation of the troops, that the Government had secured a safe working majority over all parties. This meant conscription, a measure long overdue, and adequate reinforcements for the Canadian Corps. That the war would be over ere many of the conscripted men were ready for duty in the line was not foreseen.

On the day upon which voting took place, Capt. H. A. Elliot reported for duty with the Battalion, and was appointed Paymaster. Seven days later, just after the unit had taken over the front line in the Chaudiere Sector, misfortune overtook one of its patrols. Lieut. A. W. Bannard, in the line for the first time as an officer, with ten men and a Lewis gun, left the right flank of the Battalion frontage at 8:40 p.m. with the intention of making a two-hour reconnaissance along the enemy's line and of returning by the left flank. With two scouts in advance, the patrol pushed forward until close to the enemy positions — so close, indeed, that the scouts could hear the garrison conversing in low tones. Suddenly a sentry rose up right in front of the two scouts, and challenged them, and almost immediately the Germans, who had been on the alert, opened fire with rifles and grenades upon the patrol.

Lieut. Bannard and his party found themselves surrounded on three sides, as they were between two saps, manned by the enemy, which ran forward from his line. From three sides stick grenades were being hurled at the patrol and rifles fired at it. The survivors of the first fusillade sought what cover they could, and the Lewis-gunner managed to get his gun into action. He did considerable execution until his ammunition ran out, after which

he endeavoured to retire with his gun. He failed to get clear, however, and was mortally wounded by a bomb. Before falling, he had the presence of mind to throw his gun into a rain-filled shell hole. Neither he nor his gun were ever seen again.

Two members of the patrol, Ptes. S. Phipps and K. H. McPhee, managed to get away, and found shelter in a shell hole some 75 yards in front of the Battalion line. Here they were found at 6.30 on the following morning by a battle patrol, and brought in. Lieut. Bannard and five of his men were taken prisoners, the remaining three members of the patrol being killed.

V.

Christmas Day, 1917, and New Year's Day, 1918, were spent by the 31st Battalion at St. Hilaire. Here, far back from the line, the men were enabled to enjoy the festive season in peace and quietness. January 1st was a particularly memorable day, all but essential duties being suspended after the Commanding Officer's inspection and ceremonial parade at 11 o'clock. Later the best dinner that the men had enjoyed during the whole of the war was served in the big Y.M.C.A. tent at St. Hilaire. It consisted of seven courses, and ended with a bottle of beer for every man, the cost of the banquet being met from the Battalion funds. Owing to shortage of dishes, two sittings were necessary. Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen and members of his Staff were present, and remained until all the companies had taken their turn. The Brigadier addressed the men at the conclusion of the meal, wishing them the compliments of the season and commending them for their efficiency. Col. Bell also addressed the men, and called for three cheers for the Brigadier. These were given with a heartiness which must have warmed his heart, and were followed by three deafening cheers for the Battalion Commander. That the troops of Alberta were equally doughty as trenchermen as they were as men of the trenches is indicated by the fact that 1,200 pounds of turkey were consumed during that meal in addition to the six other courses.

While at St. Hilaire Brigade competitions were held in rapid firing, bayonet fighting, marching and firing and stretcher-bearers' duties. On January 12th, the Battalion and its transport were

inspected by the Divisional Commander, Major-General Burstall. After the inspection the General complimented the company commanders upon the fine appearance of the men and the excellence of the internal organization, and the ceremony concluded by a march past in column of route.

During the early part of January a number of reinforcements, some of them returned casualties, joined the Battalion, together with a new officer in the person of Lieut. A. D. Roughton. By the 18th of the month the unit, now practically at war strength, re-equipped and rested, was once more ready for the line.

On January 28th Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell again left the 31st Battalion to take over, temporarily, the command of the Brigade, his duties being assumed by Major E. S. Doughty, with Major W. W. Piper acting as Second-in-Command. On the same date the Battalion moved into brigade support in the Avion Sector. For some time the weather had been extremely bad, and the trenches in this area were deplorable. Whole lengths of parapet had caved in, rendering movement by daylight impossible in many sections of the line, and entirely blocking the trenches. Much work was required before the damage could be repaired, and the men were called upon to labour at high pressure during the hours of darkness to get the position into a habitable condition.

The 31st Battalion moved from support into the Avion Left Sub-sector of the line on February 2nd. Here the position was most peculiar. The left front-line company was occupying trenches separated from the enemy by a lake, which rendered them easy to defend. The right company was entrenched in the ruins of the village of Avion and, although on higher ground, the positions were in a very dilapidated condition. In the main they consisted of a series of small posts, isolated during the daytime and linked at night by patrols. A gap of some 100 yards separated the two front-line companies, caused by an arm of the lake, and this gap also had to be patrolled during the hours of darkness.

On the right the patrolling of the front line presented difficulties which were enhanced by the presence of many splintered tree stumps. These provided good cover from which snipers could fire on the men. There were also smashed houses and rubble heaps, and the twisted girders of a railway bridge, which afforded hiding places for scouts and sharpshooters. Under these circum-

stances the work of patrolling was an onerous and somewhat nerve-racking job, calling for caution and constant vigilance.

An unusual incident occurred on the night of the 7th. Lieut. O'Hara, with his sergeant, proceeded out towards the enemy line in the pitch darkness. As the officer, who was in the lead, was crawling forward the ground beneath him suddenly gave way and he fell for some distance down what turned out to be a disused well. He was badly shaken and bruised, but no bones were broken. When he had recovered his breath he called out to his bewildered sergeant, explaining what had happened, and telling him to stand by until daylight, as he feared that in the darkness it might be impossible for a search party to locate the spot. The sergeant, however, suggested a better plan. He marked the spot, and returned to the Battalion lines for a rope and assistance. He then returned to his officer, and, after some trouble, rescued him from his peculiar predicament little the worse for the adventure.

An event happened about this time which the usually sober and precise War Diary records in the following words:

"Weather conditions on the day of the 5th being favourable, the soil in our allotment was turned by Pte. Hannan, who had lately returned from a course with the Corps Agriculture Officer. A total of 30 furrows was turned over, much shrapnel and many nose caps of shells coming to light during the operation. The Battalion Orderly Room was careful to check over the next-of-kin of the workers before the work was recommenced on the morning of the 6th, and all troops were warned that should the plough strike a dud shell the shell would "Fizz" before going off. Great difficulty was experienced at first in persuading the horses to pull the plough, necessitating the aid of an additional man to ride them in order to make them move. The horses' plea was that they had been recruited as war horses and not for pulling antiquated ploughs. Today everything goes well and the horses have been reconciled to long reins."

The General Officer Commanding the 2nd Division, accompanied by an A.D.C. and one lancer, inspected the work and saw that it was good. He expressed the opinion that it had been well and truly done, and prophesied a bumper crop. If this prophesy

was correct, the Germans reaped the harvest, as within a few weeks the whole area was in their hands.

VI.

Lieut.-Col. Bell returned from Brigade Headquarters and resumed command of the Alberta Regiment on February 10th. Six days later Lieut.-Col. Nelson Spencer, who was destined to command the Battalion during the triumphant "Last Hundred Days," and Lieut. C. E. Rubin reported to Battalion Headquarters. The former had been in command of the 175th Battalion in England, from which unit many reinforcements had already been drafted to the 31st Battalion.

At this time one of the finest officers in the Battalion, Lieut. J. A. Cameron, D.S.O., was killed as the result of an unfortunate accident while patrolling in "No Man's Land." His loss was deeply regretted by all.

During this month of February the condition of the enemy opposite the Canadian front might be described as "jumpy." His sentries appeared to have been increased in number, and they were always particularly alert. His patrols were numerous and daring. Upon the least provocation, and with increasing frequency, his artillery would burst into tornadoes of fire, sweeping front-line and support positions or the rearward areas. Particularly shy was he of aircraft observation, his own aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns doing all that was possible to prevent the British aviators from crossing his line in daylight.

For already, behind that line, there was unceasing activity — activity of which the enemy wanted as little known as possible. Troops were on the march, and troop trains were rumbling along the railroads; the roads were choked with transport; huge new munition dumps were being assembled and new guns brought up to the Western Front. From the east, where Russia and Rumania were no longer to be feared, and from the Austrian front, where the demoralized and shattered forces of Italy had been hurled back into their own territory, every division and every gun which could be spared were being brought up against the French and British armies. Every available man — the very young and those far past their prime — had been called up and were now being thrust into the line.

The whole remaining might of Germany was being assembled for one last, desperate bid for victory. Those in charge of the destinies of the Central Powers knew that their resources were nearing exhaustion, and that success must be swift if overwhelming defeat was to be avoided. For Germany the sands of time were rapidly running out, and neither men nor munitions were to be spared in the final westward thrust for victory.

VII.

The morning of March 4th, while the 31st Battalion was at St. Lawrence Camp, near Villers Au Bois, was marked by a terrific bombardment in the forward area. So heavy was the gun fire that a major operation seemed imminent, and the 6th Brigade was ordered to "stand to." Within half an hour, however, the front quietened down, and it was learned that a large raid had been made on the lines of the 21st Battalion. This had been successfully repulsed, with heavy losses to the enemy.

On March 6th Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell was once more called upon to assume temporary command of the 6th Brigade, control of the 31st Battalion devolving on Major E. S. Doughty. Three days later the unit again entered the line, this time in the Lens area. The sector held was very quiet, but it was exceedingly gruesome. The trenches ran through an old cemetery, and the bones and skulls of the long-buried dead were continually coming to light.

The 13th of the month saw the Battalion in corps reserve at Houdain, where billets were taken over in the southern end of the town. Training was carried out in the mornings, and the afternoons were devoted to games and sports. It was destined to be the last really restful and peaceful time which the men were to enjoy for many a long day.

At about this time enemy aerial activity became very marked, not only against front-line troops, but also against the lines of communication far back from the front, and even against Paris itself. Great events were pending, and threw across France the shadows of hostile aircraft.

On March 19th, two days before the storm broke on the Western Front, Lieut. W. K. Jull, one of the original members of the Battalion, reported back for duty with the Alberta unit.

VIII.

While the Canadian Corps was enjoying relative quiet in the positions which it had won in the neighbourhood of Lens and Vimy Ridge, hard fighting was taking place in front of Cambrai, some 20 miles to the south-east. Hardly had the Flanders offensive come to an end when the British struck again. On November 20th, 1917, in the First Battle of Cambrai, the Third Army smashed the Hindenburg Line on a front of ten miles between the River Scarpe and St. Quentin, and advanced from four to five miles into enemy territory. During the next few days further progress was made, and very heavy fighting developed in the neighbourhood of Bourlon Wood, five miles west of Cambrai. As the enemy was driven back his resistance increased, and the passing days enabled him to bring up sufficient reinforcements to halt the British advance. Fierce fighting continued until the middle of December, by which time the enemy had lost some fifty square miles of territory, a large number of men, including over 10,000 in prisoners alone, many guns and much war material. The British, on their side, had suffered heavy casualties, and had failed to break through the enemy front; yet once again they had proved their individual superiority and had dealt another blow at German morale.

On other fronts hard fighting had taken place during 1917, but nothing of a decisive nature had eventuated. History was to prove the contention of the strategists of both sides — that decision would be reached on the Western Front.

In the middle of May, 1917, the Italian armies, assisted by British and French artillery, had launched an offensive against the Julian Alps and along the lower Isonzo. The enemy's line had been driven in, and for a time triumphant progress had been made, over 23,000 prisoners being taken by the end of the month. A further successful attack was delivered in the Trentino on June 10th, and six days later the strongly-fortified positions on Carno Cavento were captured. These Italian successes were short lived, however, and were destined to disastrous endings. On October 24th combined Austrian and German troops smashed the Italian front in the Battle of Caporetto, and thereafter drove the Italians before them in a retreat which approached dangerously near to utter rout. Within five days Udine had fallen to the enemy, who had taken

some 100,000 prisoners and 700 guns of various calibres in the first drive. By November 10th Asiago had fallen, and two days later the Austro-German forces had crossed the Lower Piave and were within 20 miles of Venice.

By this time the full force of the offensive had spent itself and the shattered Italian armies, reinforced and stiffened by British and French divisions withdrawn from the Western Front, were able to stem the advance of the enemy. The net result of the fighting had been the loss to Italy of far more territory than she had gained, the defeat of her armies at the hands of the enemy and the diversion of both German and Allied troops from the Western Front to Italy.

In the east Russia and Rumania had ceased to engage the serious attention of the Central Powers. Figuratively speaking, the frontiers were held by a Corporal's Guard, and during the summer of 1917 there was a steady movement of men and guns from the Eastern to the Western Front. It is true that a Russian offensive in Eastern Galicia early in July met with some measure of success, and checked, for a time, the westward drift of enemy troops; but before the end of the year both Russia and Rumania were out of the war.

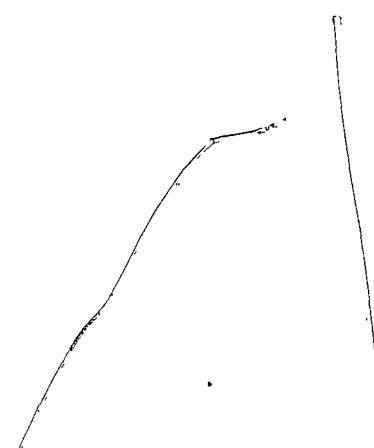
In the meantime, on June 25th, 1917, the first units of the American Army arrived in France. A full year was destined to elapse, however, before a sufficient number of men from the United States had been adequately trained to play any effective part in the war; and by that time the issue was virtually settled.

On November 9th, 1917, an important political step was taken by the formation of a Supreme Council of the Allies for the whole of the Western Front. This Council was assisted by a permanent central Military Committee consisting of General Foch (France), General Cadorna (Italy) and General Sir Henry Wilson (Great Britain).

Two other events, very important in their effects upon what was to follow, must be mentioned: late in January, 1918, the British frontage was extended southward to a point just beyond St. Quentin, and less than a month later it was again extended to La Fere. Presumably the state of the French Army rendered these extensions of the British line necessary; but they made it dangerously attenuated at a time when the opposing forces had been

greatly augmented by troops withdrawn from the Russian front. For eighteen months the armies of the British Empire had done more than their share of fighting on the Western Front, and their repeated offensives had cost them enormous casualties. The finding and training of adequate reinforcements was a problem; and even after the comparative quiet of the winter months many British divisions were still below full war strength. Under such circumstances to further weaken the line by stretching it was a step the taking of which was justifiable only on the grounds of stern necessity.

Such, then, was the general situation when, on March 21st, 1918, Hell was loosed upon the Western Front.



CHAPTER NINETEEN.

"With Our Backs to the Wall"

I.

On March 21st, 1918, Germany struck with all the weight at her disposal.

The blow fell upon the extreme right of the British line, between the Scarpe and the Oise, and was aimed at the city of Amiens, with its important railway communications. It also had as its objective the driving of a wedge between the British and French armies on the Western Front.

At this time the total length of line held by the British forces in France exceeded 125 miles. Many of the divisions holding this extended line had not yet recovered from the heavy casualties of the continual battles of the previous year, and were still considerably under strength. In addition to this, in order to fill the ranks of her huge armies, Britain had stretched the age limits for active service in both directions and had become less strict in regard to the standard of physical fitness required. The result was that the new drafts which were being received by the fighting units consisted largely of very young men, of men a little past their prime and of recruits of a physical standard which would not have been acceptable earlier in the war. This new material was to prove that it lacked nothing in spirit and courage; but it is an unquestionable fact that the physical average of the British forces in the field in the spring of 1918 was not so high as it had been in 1916.

In addition to the main army in France, Britain had to maintain considerable forces in Italy, Salonika and Palestine, as well as minor contingents in other parts of the world. Also a fine fighting force of nearly 300,000 men was retained in England to guard against a possible German invasion! As such invasion would have been quite impracticable until the combined fleets of Great Britain and the United States had been annihilated — a



virtually impossible contingency — the retention of this force for home defence when troops were so urgently needed in France is difficult to understand.

Under these circumstances the problem which faced Sir Douglas Haig in the spring of 1918 was a serious one. To guard a materially lengthened line he had at his disposal some 180,000 fewer fighting men than he had commanded twelve months before. In front of him was an enemy determined to achieve a swift decision at all costs, and greatly strengthened in both man-power and artillery by forces withdrawn from other fronts.

At the commencement of the great spring offensives the German forces on the Western Front numbered well over 3,000,000 as compared with a total of some 2,500,000 Allied troops. In addition to this the predominance of artillery which the Allies had possessed had once more shifted to the enemy. To the vast number of German batteries withdrawn from the east had been added some extremely efficient Austrian artillery units. Immense though the Allied gun-power undoubtedly was at this time, it would not match that of the enemy.

It was, therefore, with a material advantage in numbers and a still greater advantage in artillery that Germany commenced her great spring campaign.

II.

By this time the British had adopted a flexible defensive system somewhat after the manner of that employed by Ludendorff along the Hindenburg line in the previous year. There was an outpost zone, occupied by detached parties. Behind the observing posts were machine gunners, and behind the machine guns was the first infantry line of any continuity and strength. All this formed the foreground position. At a certain depth behind it, varying according to the nature of the ground and the scheme of defence, was the battle zone, in which it was intended to fight a pitched battle when the enemy had been compelled to reveal his forces and the methods he was employing. In places the British had advanced strong points, screened by protecting devices, and serving both as enfilading machine-gun positions against forces working through the outpost line, and as artillery observation centres from which,

by sunken telephone cables, groups of guns could be closely directed upon forces striving to reach the battle zone.

It was only possible to delay the enemy in the thinly-held advanced positions; but, in addition to their direct, confusing effect upon attacking formations, the outpost forces lessened the power of the bombarding artillery by greatly increasing the depth of the ground that had to be searched by fire. They also exposed the hostile infantry to more prolonged gun fire during their struggle to reach the zone of critical conflict.

It was upon such a system of defence, manned by the Third and Fifth British Armies, that the first crushing blow of the German offensive fell. The attack was delivered on a front of 50 miles from Arras southward to the junction of the French and British forces at Tergnier, on the Oise River, just west of La Fere. Defending this frontage were 29 British infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions, of which 19 infantry divisions were in the line.

The first attacks were launched at varying hours, ranging from 7.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., on March 21st. They were preceded by an artillery bombardment of great intensity and depth, in which shells of every type were employed — gas, smoke, high explosive and shrapnel. The infantry assaults were not delivered all along the front, but at selected sectors only, where immense masses of troops were thrown in. The idea was to break the British line at a number of points and, pouring through the gaps, to isolate and capture the garrisons of the intervening sections.

Just as the weather had favoured the Germans in the great British offensive in Flanders during the previous summer and autumn, so now it again favoured them in their own attacks. The morning of March 21st was misty along practically the whole of the front attacked. At few points did visibility exceed 50 yards, and at places it was not more than a fifth of that distance.

Under cover of the mist the German masses were able to advance through the British outpost zone with a minimum of loss and disorganization. Blinded by the fog, artillery observers were unable to direct the shrapnel barrage upon the enemy concentrations, and the guns were compelled to fire at hazard; machine-gunners and rifle-men saw the enemy only when the field-grey hordes were right upon them, and were unable to do the amount of

execution which had been calculated; all movements of enemy troops were effectively veiled from British airmen, so that the Higher Command was ignorant for a time as to where the mighty thrusts were being delivered. Conditions more favourable to the Germans could hardly be imagined.

Along a front of 35 miles, from Gouzeaucourt to the Oise, the British outpost zone and advance positions were penetrated, the main battle zone was reached and, in some places, carried. South of St. Quentin the enemy had advanced, by the end of the first day's fighting, a distance of five miles, the average advance along the whole of the Gauzeaucourt-Tergnier front being about one half of this distance.

Further north the enemy had been less successful, the British lines having been penetrated between Croisilles and Baursies to a maximum depth of some two miles on a twelve-mile frontage.

During the next two days misty mornings continued to favour the enemy. Against the weakened British brigades were thrown division after division of fresh troops from the apparently inexhaustible reserves of the enemy. With the aid of great numbers of tanks and tractors the guns and ammunition were brought forward at an astonishing speed. Fighting desperately, outgunned and overwhelmingly outnumbered, the British were driven back by the irresistible tide of the German masses.

By the evening of March 23rd the whole front from Arras to the Oise had given way. From Peronne to Ham the British forces were fighting along the line of the Somme, and in this area the enemy had advanced a distance of thirteen miles in three days.

On the following day the retirement was continued, but not without fierce fighting. By this time the situation was critical. Against the huge reserves of the enemy, which enabled him to throw in fresh divisions without cessation, the British had very few reserves to draw upon. Many brigades had been fighting and marching practically without rest for over three days, and officers and men were nearing the point of collapse through fatigue. So heavy had been the casualties that, in many cases, battalions had been concentrated into companies and two or three brigades had been organized into one. Labour companies, signallers, headquarters clerks and all manner of miscellaneous details were being armed and thrown into the battle line. The odds were greater

against the British at this time than they had been at the opening of the battle, in spite of heavy German casualties and three French divisions which had been sent in to reinforce the line.

During the afternoon of March 25th Courcelette, in the taking of which the 31st Battalion had played so gallant a part, was recaptured by the enemy. The next two days were marked by a further series of retirements. By the evening of March 27th the British line ran, approximately, from a point six miles east of Arras in a south-westerly direction through Bucquay, then southward to Albert, which was in German hands, through Hamel and Bouchoir and thence south-westward again to form a sharp salient in front of Montdidier. In this neighbourhood the German advance had penetrated the British positions to a depth of 25 miles, while near Hamel the enemy had reached a point only 12 miles from Amiens.

III.

These great German successes had recaptured all the territory so painfully and bloodily won in the Battle of the Somme, and had advanced the German line at one point ten miles beyond the positions it had occupied in June, 1916. They had not been won, however, without tremendous cost. To achieve them the enemy had been compelled to draw heavily on his strategic reserves. The British had fought stubbornly, and had exacted a great price. So heavy, indeed, had been the German casualties that on March 28th a halt had to be called for reorganization. Ludendorff allowed Marwitz and Hutier two days to re-form their original forces, which were strengthened by the last picked formations from the enemy general reserve, including the Prussian Guard. Then, on Saturday, March 30th, the grand battle was renewed on a front of some 50 miles, from the Somme near Villers-Bretonneux to the River Oise below Noyon. North of the Somme a strong subsidiary holding attack was delivered between Albert and Arras, making the battle front with all its windings some 80 miles long. There were two main thrusts. One was directed against the Thiescourt plateau between Noyon and Lassigny, the other against the Amiens railway line near Montdidier.

By this time further French reinforcements were beginning to arrive to support the sorely tried British, and the two days'

respite had given the Allies an opportunity of reorganizing their forces and improving their positions.

During the next six days — March 30th to April 5th — substantial progress was made by the enemy along a front of some 25 miles from a point just north of the Somme to Montdidier. Here the maximum penetration was ten miles and the average over five, Hamel, Demuin and Moreuil being captured. This advance threatened the north-and-south railway communications behind the Allied lines, but it did no more; and it marked the virtual finish of German progress in this direction.

By April 5th fresh Allied forces had been brought into the line and were well entrenched upon the hills which guarded the trunk railway. The enemy continued to attack in great force, now at one point and now at another, and heavy fighting continued throughout the month of April; but the force of the German drive had spent itself. Further gains were made, but they were of a minor or local nature.

So ended the first great blow of the German spring offensive. In failing to obtain his first important objective — the railway communications of Amiens — the enemy had seen all his costly tactical successes turned into a great strategic reverse. He had inflicted tremendous casualties on the Third and Fifth British Armies, had taken some 95,000 prisoners and over 1,000 guns, and had captured a great area of Allied territory; he had driven a huge salient into the Franco-British line, thereby still further lengthening the frontage to be defended; but he had suffered severely himself, had made heavy draughts upon his reserves and had failed to achieve his goal.

IV.

While these stirring events were taking place the Canadian Corps was holding the line to the immediate north of the area of battle and well within earshot of the thunder of bombardment and counter-bombardment. On March 21st the 6th Brigade was located in and around Houdain, and on that day the Corps Commander and his Staff carried out an inspection of the 27th, 28th and 31st Battalions on the muddy parade ground of the town. During the early part of the day rumours of the German attack came through, and late in the afternoon these rumours were

confirmed in orders. At the same time Brigade officers were ordered forward to reconnoitre the line near Oppy, which was to be taken over in order to release troops for the south.

On March 23rd the 31st Battalion, complete with transport, paraded at Houdain at 9.30 a.m. and marched to Estree Cauchie, arriving there three hours later. The Brigade had been split, and while the 27th Battalion accompanied the 31st, the 28th and 29th Battalions had proceeded to Camblain L'Abbe.

At Estree Cauchie the men rested in a field for some six hours, and then moved on by bus to Villers Au Bois. Here the Battalion found comfortable billets in huts at Rispin Camp. Throughout the night the continual thunder of guns could be heard from the south, and at about 3:30 a.m. on the following morning a terrific barrage broke out which appeared to extend north along the front of Vimy Ridge. Later in the day, Lieut.-Col. Bell, who had been in temporary command of the Brigade, resumed command of the 31st Battalion. Orders were immediately issued recalling all ranks on leave, and on courses of instruction, to the unit.

Two days later, on March 26th, the Battalion moved out en route for Pommier, south-west of Arras, and some 17 miles distant. The march commenced at 11.25 p.m., and ended at 7 o'clock on the following morning. In spite of the distance, the men swung along in fine spirits and finished in good condition.

At Pommier the Battalion bivouacked in a field. The day was cold, and heavy rain fell, drenching the men to the skin and causing acute discomfort. A cold night followed, and throughout the next day, until 6.00 p.m., the men stood by in the rain, ready to move at a moment's notice. During the evening accommodation of sorts was found in barns and outhouses, or any other place which would afford shelter from the downpour. At dusk patrols were pushed out covering the village.

During the night orders were received for the Brigade to reconnoitre a line running approximately north and south through the village of Pommier. While this work was being carried out the Officer Commanding received word that the Canadian Corps front had been attacked, and the Battalion was immediately ordered to "stand to." The alarm, however, proved to be false.

On March 29th, news from the south continued to dribble through, and to become more and more ominous. At 1.45 p.m.

the 31st Battalion, with its transport, was paraded on ground adjacent to Pommier. Here its commander, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., addressed the assembled men. Briefly he outlined the situation, emphasizing its seriousness and indicating the critical time through which the British Army was passing. He spoke, without exaggeration or belittlement, of the success which had attended the operations of the enemy and of the steps which were being taken to meet the German drive. Then he read the Special Order of the Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir A. W. Currie. The order, under the date of March 27th, 1918, was as follows:

“In an endeavour to reach an immediate decision, the enemy has gathered all his forces and struck a mighty blow at the British Army. Overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers, the British divisions in the line between the Scrape and the Oise have fallen back, fighting hard, steady and undismayed.

“Measures have been taken successfully to meet this German onslaught. The French have gathered a powerful army, commanded by a most able and trusted leader, and this army is now moving swiftly to our help. Fresh divisions are being thrown in. The Canadians are soon to be engaged. Our Motor Machine Gun Brigade has already played a most gallant part and once again covered itself with glory.

“Looking back with pride on the unbroken record of your glorious achievements, asking you to realize that today the fate of the British Empire hangs in the balance, I place my trust in the Canadian Corps, knowing that where the Canadians are engaged there can be no giving way.

“Under the orders of your devoted officers in the coming battle you will advance or fall where you stand facing the enemy. To those who fall I say ‘You will not die but step into immortality. Your mothers will not lament your fate, but will be proud to have borne such sons. Your names will be revered for ever and ever by your grateful country and God will take you unto Himself.’

“Canadians, in this fateful hour, I command you and I trust you to fight as you have ever fought with all your strength, with all your determination, and with all your tranquil courage. On many a hard fought field of battle you have

overcome this enemy. With God's help you shall achieve victory once more."

Immediately following the conclusion of the address, the Battalion marched from Pommier to Bellacourt, a distance of six miles. Bellacourt was reached at 3.45 p.m., and tea was served to the men.

V.

At this time the 2nd Canadian Division was transferred from the Third Army Reserve to the VI Corps for all purposes, and had been ordered to relieve the 3rd British Division in the line. In conjunction with the rest of the Division, the 6th Brigade moved forward into divisional reserve, while the 4th and 5th Brigades proceeded to Wailly and Ficheux respectively.

The area in which the 2nd Division was now located was some three or four miles south-west of Arras, opposite the troops of the German Mars group. In view of the progress of the German offensive to the south, the Division might be involved, at any moment, in desperate conflict, and every possible step was taken to meet a break-through by the enemy.

The night was very dark as the brigades of the 2nd Canadian Division moved up to take over their new positions. The roads were narrow and choked with transport and troops on the march. As a result, progress was slow and difficult.

As soon as the 31st Battalion reached its destination, it was put into old trenches in support of the 4th Brigade. The line ran roughly south-west, and was located about half-a-mile east of Wailly. Immediately the companies had taken up their positions 550 of the men were set to work upon the construction of a new trench line some 1,300 yards in length, traversed, and some 4 feet deep. The task took six hours to complete; and the men, as they worked in the drenching rain, were under orders to be prepared to move into the defensive positions at a moment's notice should an enemy attack take place.

On the last day of March orders were received to the effect that as many officers as could be spared were to make a reconnaissance of the "Purple Line" and the approaches thereto, from Adinfer to the northern Corps boundary. Accordingly at 6:00

a.m. two parties set out: the first of these consisted of Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, Lieut.-Col. Nelson Spencer, Lieut. Mee and the Battalion Scouts; the second, led by Major E. S. Doughty, consisted of 11 officers and 18 other ranks. In all, about 13 miles of frontage was thoroughly reconnoitred, the job being completed shortly after noon. On the same day over half the Battalion were employed in digging a new line of defence running south-west and to the immediate east of Wailly. The pouring rain, which was rapidly reducing the ground to a liquid mud, added to the difficulty of this work, but it was finally completed to the satisfaction of the Officer Commanding.

The village of Wailly was literally a nest of guns, and the batteries had been causing the enemy considerable losses and inconvenience. Throughout the day of April 1st the German artillery searched the whole area for the British gun positions. In this exchange of heavy shell fire the working parties of the 31st Battalion came in for their share of the enemy bombardment, which caused a number of casualties. Enemy aircraft were also most active in observation and in attacking British balloons, four of which were brought down in flames in the immediate vicinity of Wailly. During the evening the 6th Brigade Headquarters sent forward orders regarding the disposition of the several battalions in the line. These stated that the positions were to be held on a three-battalion frontage by the 28th, 29th and 31st Battalions in the order named from right to left, and that the 27th Battalion was to remain in support.

In accordance with these orders the 31st Battalion relieved the 22nd French Canadians in the Brigade left sub-sector just east of Mercatel. Before midnight the relief was completed. The line held, which was known as the "Green Line," was not well consolidated, and immediately it had been taken over, the men of the 31st Battalion set to work upon the improvement of the positions.

Before going into the line on April 2nd the Battalion had received some welcome reinforcements in the persons of Capt. W. N. Graham and Lieut. W. G. Stillman, who reported to Headquarters with a draft of 48 other ranks. On the same day the transport and details moved up from Bellacourt to Bailleulval.

During the following day the work of improving the trénelles occupied by the Battalion was continued in so far as circumstances permitted. At the fall of darkness Lieut. J. H. Gainor took out a patrol to ascertain, if possible, the position of the enemy. After crawling forward in the mud and pouring rain for a distance of some 600 yards, the patrol ascertained that the enemy was not occupying any of the old trenches or sunken roads on the immediate frontage of the Battalion.

The early hours of April 4th were marked by a very heavy enemy bombardment along the Battalion lines and over to the left. This lasted for some time, and the men "stood to" in expectation of an attack. Nothing happened, however, and the rest of the day passed quietly. Word was received at this time of a possible attack upon the Canadian positions, and as a consequence patrol after patrol was sent out during the night, and in the pouring rain, in an endeavour to obtain information of enemy movements. These found that everything was quiet on the Battalion front, no signs of any enemy concentration being discovered.

At 6.00 a.m. on April 6th the enemy opened up a very heavy bombardment of the rearward areas which lasted for four hours, in which a large number of gas shells were employed. The positions occupied by the 31st Battalion also came in for some attention from the enemy artillery, with the result that four men of A Company were killed and two were wounded. An attack seemed imminent, but again nothing transpired. To the left, however, the enemy sent over two raids, which were driven off. The bombardment cut all telephonic communication between the line and Battalion Headquarters, and Scouts I. Florence and A. Brander were sent forward to keep in touch with the front line.

On the following day a scattered shelling by the enemy caused further casualties, three men being killed and one officer (Lieut. C. E. Rubins) and three other ranks being wounded. Shortly after midnight on April 6th the 27th Battalion filed in to the relief of the 31st, the latter taking up its position in brigade reserve in the "Purple Line."

Under the circumstances, this tour of the Alberta Regiment in the line must be regarded as having been a quiet and eventless one. The shelling was nothing out of the ordinary, and no attack developed. It rained almost the whole time, to the intense

discomfort of the men; but this, after all, was little more than a normal experience.

VI.

After spending two days in brigade reserve the 31st Battalion proceeded to Wailly on April 9th. On the same day orders were received for the 2nd Division to return to the First Army. Within a few hours, however, these orders were cancelled, the British division which was to have been relieved by the Canadians having been ordered forward to stem a German attack north of La Bassee. By this time the great German drive for Amiens was dying down, and the second spring offensive had been launched against the British lines between La Bassee and Ypres.

For two days the 31st Battalion rested, but men and transport were ready to move at a moment's notice. On April 11th, Sir Douglas Haig's momentous message to all troops under his command was promulgated. No history dealing with the war would be complete without the inclusion of the text of this inspiring summons, in which the Commander-in-Chief revealed his faith in his officers and men by taking them into his confidence. The message read as follows:—

“To all ranks of the British Army in France and Flanders:

“Three weeks ago to-day the enemy began his terrific attacks against us on a 50-mile front. His objects are to separate us from the French, to take the Channel ports, and destroy the British Army.

“In spite of throwing already 106 divisions into the battle and enduring the most reckless sacrifice of human life, he has as yet made little progress towards his goals. We owe this to the determined fighting and self-sacrifice of our troops.

“Words fail me to express the admiration which I feel for the splendid resistance offered by all ranks of our army under the most trying circumstances. Many amongst us now are tired. To those I would say that victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest.

“The French army is moving rapidly and in great force to our support. There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man; there

must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the freedom of mankind depend alike upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment."

Parading at 8.00 p.m. on April 12th, the 31st Battalion set out for duty before Neuville Vitasse, where it relieved the 22nd Battalion. Meanwhile Lieut.-Col. Bell had proceeded to the I Corps Headquarters at La Buisere to extemporize a brigade of railway troops. By this time the situation had become so critical upon the British front that all kinds of details and special troops were being hurriedly collected and organized into fighting units. In the absence of its Officer Commanding, the control of the 31st Battalion was assumed by Major E. S. Doughty, with Major W. W. Piper as Second-in-Command.

VII.

In the meantime, as Sir Douglas Haig's message had made abundantly clear, the situation on the British front had become more and more desperate. Reference had already been made to the dangerous stretching of the line held by the British, and to the weakness of many of the divisions holding it. There is little doubt that German Intelligence knew, or at least made a shrewd guess at, the conditions that existed; and the German High Command had evidently decided to exploit the situation to the full and to use up, if necessary, every available reserve in an effort to crush the British Army. The enemy appeared content to merely hold the French while he directed all the might of his offensives against the British line.

Hardly had the fury of his first great onslaught upon the southern extremity of the British front abated when he struck again. This time the blow was delivered in a north-westerly direction from the heights of the Lille Ridge. Following a steady bombardment of several days along the entire front, an intensive barrage was put down at about 4 o'clock on the morning of April 9th against the British positions between Armentieres and Lens. An hour later the guns lifted, and the infantry poured forward.

The British line was not held in sufficient strength to resist an onslaught of the weight of that delivered by the German masses. Many fresh divisions had been withdrawn from this area to meet the thrust of the enemy further south, and had been replaced by the shattered and weary units which had borne the brunt of the fighting in front of Amiens. These divisions had been reduced, in many cases, to the strength of a single brigade, and were in poor condition to stand further heavy fighting.

Around Lavantie, near the centre of the initial German attack, the line was held by a Portuguese division. The barrage in this area was particularly severe, and once more mist came to the assistance of the enemy. Within four hours the whole of the Portuguese positions, with the exception of that held by a single battalion, had been captured, and the front pierced. One battalion very stubbornly held its ground and, surrounded by the enemy, fought on until it had expended all its ammunition. The remainder of the division, however, retreated precipitately without offering serious opposition to the enemy. By nightfall the Germans had broken through on a front of some 13 or 14 miles, and at Lavantie the penetration was 3 miles. In this region the advance had reached the line of the Lys, and the enemy had succeeded in crossing the river in small parties.

The morning of April 10th was again foggy. During the day the Lys was crossed in force by both infantry and artillery. Estaires was captured after severe fighting and later Messines and the south-east parts of Ploegsteert Wood were taken by the enemy. The forward positions at Hollebeke had to be abandoned, and the British line fell back upon Wytschaete Ridge.

The enemy advance to the north made the position of the 34th British Division at Armentieres untenable, and the town had to be abandoned.

On April 11th the German advance continued. Only between the River Law and Givenchy was a successful resistance maintained. Elsewhere along the line of the German onslaught the British forces were falling back. For the second time within two weeks a British defeat seemed inevitable.

There were places where nothing but a thin line of British troops, practically without supports or reserves, stood between the advancing Germans and the Channel ports. Reinforcing

battalions going into the line were ordered to hold the enemy "at all costs." They obeyed, fighting until all their ammunition and most of their lives had been expended. They held on — many of them — until shot down from the rear by an enemy which had surrounded them.

The artillery power employed by the Germans was even stronger than that which had been used in the southern offensive. Behind every division in the German attack were 130 batteries in addition to 300 trench mortars and infantry guns. Against this overwhelming superiority the heaviest fire of the numerous British batteries seemed feeble; against every weary soldier in the defending army the attacking hosts could send three fresh men.

By the night of April 12th Merville had been occupied by the enemy, his total advance at this point being about 8 miles. Further north Steenwerck, Ploegsteert and the southern portion of Ploegsteert Wood had been captured, and the whole British front had been driven in from La Bassee to Warneton. Three days later Bailleul fell, together with the strong line of Mont de Lille and Ravelsberg, which formed the outer defences of the higher hills behind. Only in front of the Forest of Nieppe was the enemy firmly held by the Guards and the 31st Division.

On April 16th, when fog again veiled the plains, blows were struck at the village of Wytschaete and the high ground near it known as the height of Spanbroekenmolen. Both were lost, enabling the enemy to strike sideways, as well as frontally, at Kemmel.

On the following day a sudden surprise attack was launched against the Belgian line north-east of Ypres. At first the Belgians gave ground, but they came back with a gallant counter-attack which regained the lost territory, and made some 600 prisoners.

The second stage of the battle was now beginning. French reinforcements had just appeared in the struggle proceeding about Kemmel; and Ludendorff, in supreme command of the German forces on the Western Front, was anxious to strike decisively before General Foch could send further assistance. After an intensive bombardment the enemy struck heavily from the Forest of Nieppe to Wytschaete, entering Meteren and gaining a footing on Wytschaete Ridge, but failing at Dranoutre and Kemmel Hill.

Then Bethune was assailed through Hinges and Rebecq. Then German divisions took part in the prolonged attack, and suffered heavily. Each successive assault was either driven back or blasted out of existence by the British artillery.

By this time Ludendorff began to realize that, after heartening initial successes, his divisions were being held. Again and again he struck, now at one side of the salient he had driven into the British line and now at the other; but nowhere did his attacks meet with substantial success. At last, on April 24th, with fog again to aid them, the armies of Generals Arnim and Quast re-concentrated and advanced upon the hill line at St. Eloi and Loker — an area well known to the veterans of the 31st Battalion. Kemmel Hill was saturated with poison gas, and on April 25th the French garrison was driven out and the hill was carried by the enemy. The loss of this great observation post was a serious blow, and the Allied line was drawn back to the Grand Bois by Wytschaete and the lower Vierstraat, the Scherpenberg and Loker.

► Loker was garrisoned by French reinforcements, and on April 26th it was attacked and captured. A few hours later, however, it was once more in French possession. A cavalry force, after riding hard for 60 miles, dismounted and at once went into action before the enemy had time to consolidate the position.

This action virtually closed the second great German offensive. Once more the enemy had gained territory — this time to a maximum depth of some 12 miles on a front of from 30 to 35 miles; once more he had inflicted many casualties upon the British, and had taken large numbers of prisoners and guns; but his own losses were extremely heavy and he had failed to force that decision which was so vitally necessary.

One regrettable result of this battle — regrettable from both the sentimental and strategic view points — was the abandonment to the north of ground sanctified by British sacrifice and British blood. To find troops to resist the German onslaught it was necessary to withdraw divisions from before Ypres. This involved the shortening of the front by the ironing out of the Salient. The line was withdrawn, with hardly a blow struck, almost to the ramparts of the ancient Flemish town: Passchendaele Ridge, to capture which the Canadian Corps had poured out its blood a bare six

months before, was abandoned; Poelcappelle, won at the cost of so much bitter fighting, was given up; Zonnebeke, Langemarck and a dozen other places captured in the previous year at the price of crippling casualties were evacuated. With the loss of hardly a man the Germans marched forward over ground to gain each square yard of which a British soldier had fallen.

Perhaps, at this point, an abstract from Sir Douglas Haig's summary of these great operations on the British front might be quoted. He writes, in part, as follows:

"At no time, either on the Somme or on the Lys, was there anything approaching a breakdown of command or a failure of morale. Under conditions that made rest and sleep impossible for days together, and called incessantly for the greatest physical exertion and quickness of thought, officers and men remained undismayed, realizing that for the time being they must play a waiting game, and determined to make the enemy pay the full price for the success which for the moment was his."

One other event of very great importance which sprang out of the critical days of March and April must be referred to. This was the appointment in April of the great French General, Foch, to supreme command of all troops in France, Belgium and Flanders. For some time the military necessity of a generalissimo to assume supreme control on the Western Front had been realized, but it required a desperate crisis to overcome the prejudices and political difficulties which stood in the way of the adoption of this obvious step. In the choice of Foch a leader was obtained who was destined to prove worthy of the trust reposed in him.



VIII.

We left the 31st Battalion on April 12th at Neuville Vitasse. On the following day a number of returned casualties reported back to the unit, while Lieut. A. D. Roughton and 31 other ranks proceeded for duty with the newly formed 2nd Canadian Machine Gun Battalion.

By this time the Canadian Corps had commenced to undergo a slow process of disintegration. Early in April machine-gun units and cavalry had been assisting the British in their efforts to stem

the German drive for Amiens, while individual divisions had been transferred from army to army as the requirements of the moment had dictated.

The tour of the 31st Battalion in the trenches before Neuville Vitasse was a quiet one, dedicated chiefly to improving and consolidating the line, putting out wire and continuous patrolling. On April 16th the unit was relieved by the 28th Battalion and went into brigade support in the Telegraph Hill Switch and the trenches in the Telegraph Hill support positions. As the men were going out a shell from a British battery — presumably a 4.5-in. howitzer — fell short in the front line, killing two men and wounding three others.

The trenches occupied by the Alberta unit in brigade support had been constructed during the withdrawal of the British armies towards Amiens, and formed part of a last main resistance line. Orders had been issued to the effect that no retirement was to be made from these positions. They were to be defended to the last round of ammunition, and then with the bayonet to the last man. Luckily, circumstances did not necessitate such drastic hanging on. By this time the German forces were fully engaged further north, and no attack developed on the 31st Battalion lines.

On April 19th the enemy shelled the Battalion area continuously, but only caused a few slight wound casualties. On the following day the enemy continued to direct a harassing fire on the rearward areas, and shelled the line occupied by D Company on the left flank of the 31st Battalion, doing considerable damage to the trenches. That night the 21st Battalion relieved the 31st in brigade support, and the Alberta unit proceeded to billets in Wailly.

April 21st saw the birth of a new combatant company for the 31st Battalion. This was known as the Headquarters Company, and included the Communication Section, Headquarters' Details, Intelligence Section, Band, Transport and Quartermaster's Section. One platoon of this company included four Lewis-gun crews and was under the command of Lieut. W. M. Harris. With the formation of this company every officer and man on the strength of the Battalion, with the exception of the Chaplain and the Medical Officer, became immediately available for service in the line.

On April 23rd Lieut.-Col. Bell again assumed command of the 6th Brigade on account of the departure of Brig.-Gen. H. D. B. Ketchen for England.

The following night saw the 31st Battalion once more in the line. This time it took over the centre sub-section of the divisional right sector, covering Mercatel. No sooner were the men in the line than they commenced digging and repairing the trenches, putting out wire and other work of a like nature, while patrol after patrol was sent forward to reconnoitre in "No Man's Land."

The last days of the month of April passed quietly enough for the men of Alberta. Work upon improving the positions was proceeded with, and at night much patrolling had to be done. In the early morning of April 29th the 31st Battalion co-operated in a raid organized by the 6th Brigade by a demonstration with Lewis guns, rifles and grenades. In this raid 10 prisoners and 5 machine guns were captured. Apart from this minor activity, however, nothing noteworthy occurred.

IX.

Although neither the Canadian Corps as a whole, nor the 31st Battalion as an individual unit, was engaged in any major operation during the two great spring assaults of the enemy against the British front, it would be quite erroneous to assume that the men of the Dominion had experienced an easy time. The period was one of continual tension and suspense. At any moment an attack in overwhelming force might have been launched against the Canadian lines, and the whole Corps involved in desperate conflict. The men lived in daily anticipation of such an attack and in a state of constant preparedness to meet it and to resist it, if necessary, to the last man.

The enemy artillery was active, and heavy trench-mortar bombardments were of daily occurrence. On two occasions the troops on the immediate right of the 31st Battalion were raided while the unit was in the line, and a determined attempt was made against the 22nd Battalion on one occasion almost immediately after it had relieved the Alberta Regiment. On their side the Canadians launched a number of raids against the enemy positions,

Divisional and Brigade Headquarters being insistent in their demands for prisoners for identification purposes.

To guard against surprise the whole front was covered by patrols. Work upon the improvement of the positions held by the Canadian Corps was continuous. New trench lines and points of resistance were constructed, existing lines improved and strengthened and additional wire put out. For the men there was little rest and no relaxation of the tension under which they were placed. Indeed, this period of strained inaction — using the word in a strictly relative sense — upon the verge of furious fighting has come to be regarded by those who experienced it as by no means the least trying period of the war.

CHAPTER TWENTY.

May, 1918

I.

By the adventitious fortunes of war the month of April, which had been marked by such desperate fighting on the British front, had been quiet in so far as the 31st Battalion was concerned. Although within the zone of battle, it had been placed upon the verge of the area of conflict; and, while occupying important and critical positions, it so happened that no enemy attacks had developed upon its frontage. With the exception of certain detached units operating with British divisions, the same thing applied to the Canadian Corps as a whole, which played no conspicuous part in either of the titanic struggles fought by the British armies. The time was soon to come in which the troops of the Dominion were to win for themselves further renown at least as illustrious as any they had won upon the Somme, at Vimy, or in the Ypres Salient; but that time was not yet.

Curiously enough the month of May, during which no major operations took place upon the Western Front, brought to the 31st Battalion more actual action than had the momentous five weeks which preceded it.

When the German offensive south of Ypres had exhausted itself against the indefatigable resistance of the British, the enemy was compelled to call a halt in his aggressive operations for reorganization purposes. The two great spring offensives had severely punished the British forces; but the British had handed out, in their turn, severe punishment; and Ludendorff found himself, at the beginning of May, with more than half his mobile reserve dissipated and the necessary decision as far off as ever. Apart from their psychological effects upon the German people, tactical successes and territorial gains were of no use to the

German General Staff. Nothing less than a decisive victory, before the weight of the legions of fresh troops from the United States could make itself felt, would save Germany from defeat.

For this reason there was a lull in the fighting during May. Germany was reorganizing, resting her shock divisions and training them, and making preparations for a final, desperate bid for victory. As yet the Allies were not in a position to assume the offensive, and were well content to occupy the welcome breathing space in reorganizing their own shattered forces.

II.

The 31st Battalion was engaged in its first activity of the month on May 3rd. For some time preparations for a raid on the enemy's lines had been in progress, the 28th Battalion having been selected for the task of carrying out the major operation. The 31st Battalion was to co-operate by attacking an enemy's post on the left flank, thereby creating a diversion from the main assault. This duty was assigned to D Company.

The material objective of the men of this Company was a machine-gun post in the enemy line; its principal aim was to assist the 28th Battalion by creating a diversion; its minor purposes were to inflict casualties and cause destruction to the enemy's position.

The raiding party was divided into four groups. No. 1 Group was led by Lieut. E. L. Scott; it was to enter the German trench in the left rear of the machine-gun post, and, working along the trench, attack the post from the rear, while No. 2 Group carried out a frontal attack. No. 3 Group, under Lieut. G. A. Cunliffe, was to cover the attacking parties, while Group No. 4, composed of stretcher bearers, was to cover the front line left flank, to check the raiding party as it came in and to render such assistance as circumstances might demand.

Under cover of darkness the raiding party took up its positions and awaited the barrage which would herald the attack. At 2.30 a.m. on May 3rd the supporting artillery and machine guns opened up, and the raid was launched. Very promptly the enemy guns replied, bringing a bombardment to bear upon the Battalion positions and rearward areas which cut telephonic communications between the front line and Battalion Headquarters.

The men of D Company crossed the open and entered the enemy's positions without opposition. They then proceeded to make their way cautiously down the trench towards the rear of the machine-gun post. In the darkness, however, one of the raiders ran foul of a "boobey trap" set in the parapet and trench bottom; it fired immediately and warned the enemy, who raced back to the support trenches and sent up flares from the picquet line. Within a minute or so of the alarm the German artillery brought a box barrage to bear around the position occupied by D Company, preventing the men from moving and pinning them down under the shelter of parapet and ~~parados~~. For twenty minutes the barrage continued, while on the right the raid of the 28th Battalion proceeded without serious interference from the guns. At length, however, the enemy became aware of the fact that the main raid was not being carried out on the 31st Battalion front, and switched his artillery to meet the menace of the 28th Battalion. This enabled the men of D Company to proceed with their raid, which they did, only two men being wounded by shell fire.

Meanwhile the 28th Battalion, in its raid on the Arras-Bapaume Road Between Boiry and Mercatel, met with hard hand-to-hand fighting in which the enemy made stubborn resistance. It succeeded in taking eight prisoners and five machine guns, in addition to inflicting other casualties. Four other ranks were killed in the operation, and 42 were wounded, most of them only slightly.

Later on the same day Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., relinquished command of the 31st Battalion upon his promotion to the rank of Brigadier-General and appointment to the command of the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade. This promotion came as a fitting reward for the services which Col. Bell had rendered while in command of the Alberta Regiment; and it is not too much to say that the high standard of efficiency of this fine unit was due, to a great extent, to the soldierly qualities and splendid example of the man who, for three and a half years, had been its leader. At the same time Major E. S. Doughty was promoted to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, and appointed to the command of the Alberta unit.

That evening the 31st Battalion went back to billets in Bailleulval and Basseux. The march out was some nine miles in

all, so that it was late before the men were settled in their quarters.

On May 8th the Battalion paraded, in fighting order, at Bailleulval. Here the Divisional Commander, Major-General H. E. Burstall, C.B., presented the medals won by No. 11 Platoon at the Canadian Corps Rifle Meeting held at Pernes during the previous September. Of the 30 men who had taken part in the competition only nine were present on parade. Four members of the platoon had been killed, while its commander, Lieut. M. E. ~~P~~erson, and 13 other ranks had been wounded. The remainder of the team had been transferred to other formations. Following the parade, the Divisional Commander gave a short address to the officers and men, in which he spoke highly of both the achievement of No. 11 Platoon and the efficiency of the Battalion as a whole.

On the following day the 31st Battalion entrained for the Neuville Vitasse area, where it relieved the 22nd Battalion in the support positions. During the next few days the enemy was active in shelling the rearward areas and lines of communication, Battalion Headquarters suffering a bombardment which caused casualties. The lines of A and D Companies also received a somewhat severe shelling which did considerable damage to the trenches and dugouts.

On May 13th two of the senior officers of the Battalion — Majors W. W. Piper and C. H. Westmore — left the unit for the Reserve Depot at Bramshott, England, and on the same date Capt. Jewitt went down to rest camp. Two days later the 31st Battalion went forward into the line, relieving the 28th Battalion in the left sub-section before Neuville Vitasse.

On May 16th Lieut.-Col. Nelson Spencer reported to the Battalion and assumed the duties of Second-in-Command under the new Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty. On the same day 36 men were transferred to the 2nd Canadian Machine Gun Battalion, their places being taken by a similar number of reinforcements who had arrived a few days earlier.

For two days after the 31st Battalion had entered the line the area remained quiet. At dawn on May 18th, however, the enemy made a sudden and determined attack upon the positions to the immediate right of those held by the Alberta unit. These

were occupied by troops of the 32nd British Division. A sharp and stubborn fight ensued, in which the Germans entered the British positions and captured six prisoners.

III.

It was now the turn of the 31st Battalion to organize a raid upon the enemy's lines. This raid was to be launched by moonlight against the German positions at Neuville Vitasse during the early hours of May 22nd, the task being assigned to the men of B and C Companies. In preparation for the proposed operation, reconnaissance patrols were sent out every night with a view to selecting suitable jumping-off positions and locating hostile posts and entanglements.

The two selected companies were withdrawn from the line on May 19th, and proceeded into brigade support, their places being taken by two companies of the 28th Battalion. C Company was to be commanded during the raid by Capt. H. Norris, D.S.O., and B Company by Capt. D. C. Robertson, M.C.

In the support lines a taped course had been laid out representing the Neuville Vitasse defences. Over this course the two companies practiced throughout the day of May 20th and during the following night, under the supervision of a Staff Captain of the Intelligence Branch. Rehearsals were continued until each man knew the topography of the area to be raided and the duty which had been assigned to his party. That night, while the raiding companies rested, a bombardment of 6-inch howitzers was brought down upon the enemy's positions with the object of cutting his wire.

At 9.15 p.m., on May 21st, the raiding parties moved up to their first assembly positions in the line opposite to Neuville Vitasse. Here the men dumped their surplus kit and, under the clear light of the moon, commenced their hazardous crawl forward to the jumping-off line. This was reached without misadventure, all the men being in position five minutes after midnight.

On the left of B Company an enemy post sighted the patrols which were covering the raid and bombed them vigorously until an artillery and machine-gun barrage was brought down which effectively silenced it. Meanwhile the Battalion Scouts had made a successful reconnaissance of the enemy defences along the sector to be raided and had brought back much valuable information.

They reported that in places heavy uncut wire still protected the enemy's positions, and were able to point out the location of the observation posts and other features which were the principal objectives of the raid.

Zero hour was set for 12.45 a.m. on May 22nd, the broken nature of the ground to be crossed necessitating a moonlight attack. The bayonets and steel helmets of the raiding troops were painted a dull black to prevent glitter. As a distinguishing mark the men wore a white band on the right arm, but until the attack was launched this was covered by a khaki handkerchief. All other badges and identification marks were removed.

Promptly at zero hour the covering barrage came down upon the positions to be raided, and rested there for a few minutes. Then it moved onwards. Unfortunately it travelled a little too rapidly, and did not entirely destroy the enemy wire or sufficiently shock the garrison holding the line. Assisting the artillery barrage, the ordnance of the 6th Canadian Trench Mortar Battery rendered valuable service, while a hail of bullets from the 31st Battalion machine guns swept the front and kept its defenders pinned down. Meanwhile, on the right of the 31st Battalion, a demonstration was carried out by the 27th in order to cause a diversion, and the artillery on both flanks put down bombardments along the fronts opposite to them. All this tended to bewilder the enemy, and to keep him in ignorance as to the actual point of assault.

No sooner had the barrage lifted than the raiders dashed forward to the attack. The first wave of B Company consisted of two platoons, that on the right being under the command of Lieut. D. Murray and that on the left under Lieut. J. E. Knott. The second wave, consisting of one platoon, was commanded by Lieut. B. A. Woods. Accompanying this wave were two of the Battalion Scout Section and a demolition party consisting of a corporal and three sappers of the 4th Field Company, Canadian Engineers, who had volunteered to undertake the operation. Capt. D. C. Robertson, the Company Commander, led the attack from the right flank.

As soon as the defenders caught sight of the first wave of B Company advancing towards them they vacated their forward posts and fell back upon a line just in front of the final objective of the Company. From the right a German machine gun came into action in time to catch the second wave as it was moving up. The men at

once took cover, and Lieut. Woods detailed a Lewis-gun section and some rifle grenadiers and bombers to deal with this menace. Under cover of the bursting rifle grenades the bombers rushed the post, which was heavily protected by wire. So impetuous were the attackers that they became entangled, and, while thus enmeshed, the gun was switched onto them. Fortunately at this moment it jammed, and Lieut. Woods' men were closing in so rapidly that there was no time to get it into action again. The crew abandoned the post and ran back, leaving their weapon in the hands of the attackers.

Meanwhile the first wave had pushed on down the main road to the village, where the enemy attempted a stand. The resistance was, however, of short duration, and broke after five of the enemy had been bayoneted and five others had been made prisoner.

The demolition party, with its escort, had reached its objective by this time. This was an observation post, the destruction of which was one of the major aims of the raid. It was found to be unoccupied, as was the dugout near it. Cpl. Irwin, of the Canadian Engineers, and his sappers immediately set and fired the necessary charges, demolishing completely both the post and the dugout.

This completed the work which B Company had set out to perform, and the men retired to the Battalion lines with only five men wounded, none of them seriously.

In the meantime the men of C Company had been engaged upon the more spectacular and comprehensive operations, in connection with the raid. On account of the many different tasks to be carried out the Company had been split into five separate parties. Of these No. 1 Party consisted of 25 other ranks under the command of Lieut. J. O'Hara; No. 2 was composed of Sergt. Henderson, in charge of 15 other ranks; Sergt. A. H. Holmes led the 12 other ranks of No. 3 Party; No. 4 Party was commanded by Capt. W. N. Graham, and consisted of 25 other ranks, while No. 5 Party, also with a strength of 25 other ranks, was led by Lieut. W. T. Bannan.

As soon as the barrage lifted the raiders advanced upon the south-western portion of the village. Parties Nos. 1 and 2 directed their attack upon the main street, which at this point divides into a "U" both branches of which lead into the Beaurains-Henin Road.

One of the parties took the right-hand branch of this "U," and the other the left. From the very start severe resistance was met with by both parties. Cross fire of machine guns from posts north and south of the junction of the road and the "U" fork sprayed the line of advance. A new belt of wire, protecting a stone barrier, held up the attack at this point. Against this obstruction Lieut. O'Hara and his men threw themselves. Eventually, after repeated attempts, a few men, led by Lieut. O'Hara, managed to get through the wire and over the barrier; but two of these men were killed, and the officer and several others were wounded, and this section of No. 1 Party was compelled to withdraw without having reached its objective. On the right the balance of the party, while attempting to force a passage through a gap in the wire, was met by a shower of bombs and severe machine-gun fire which drove back several successive assaults of the raiders. One N.C.O. and one man managed to get through, but both were killed almost immediately. Repeated efforts were made to bring out the dead, but these were all unsuccessful. The wounded were brought out, however, in spite of great difficulty, through heavy machine-gun fire.

Meanwhile No. 3 Party was also meeting with stubborn resistance. A German barrier to the north side of the left fork of the "U," running approximately north-west, had been kept under fire by the 6th Canadian Trench Mortar Battery for a minute or more after zero hour. Sergt. Holmes and his men immediately made for this barrier, and in doing so encountered a strong enemy post. A short, fierce fight ensued in which three of the enemy were bayoneted and two were taken prisoner, the remainder making good their escape.

Having disposed of this post, No. 3 Party went on and came under severe fire from a machine gun, protected by wire, in a bank further up the Beaurains-Henin Road. A bombing attack was immediately launched against this post, but was unsuccessful. By this time Capt. Graham, with No. 4 Party, had gone through No. 3 and was assaulting a barrier further along the road. A reward of ten francs had been offered by this officer to every man taking a prisoner, and when the barrier was reached there was keen competition to win the reward. The Germans, however, were not in a mood to yield easily, and stubborn fighting took place. Some

of the men succeeded in getting over the barrier early in the skirmish and one of these, grabbing a German round the waist, heaved him over the barrier, exclaiming, "My name is Mitchell, and the ten francs is mine." Mitchell then returned to the fight.

The men now began to swarm over the barrier and to push on up the main road, headed by Capt. Graham. They had advanced about 40 yards when a shower of cylindrical stick bombs from either side fell into their midst, and in a few seconds seven of the party were killed or wounded. Capt. Graham himself received a terrible wound from a bursting bomb and his men, seeing him fall, rushed him back with all possible speed. They had great difficulty in getting the wounded officer over the barrier and through the enemy barrage to the Battalion lines, but they managed it. Unfortunately his wound was so serious that medical skill was unavailing, and Capt. Graham died a few hours later.

No. 4 Party now commenced bombing the dugouts along the road. Suddenly, while some of the men were engaged in bombing a particularly deep dugout, they became aware of a body of some 40 Germans who were attempting to cut their line of retreat. Sergt. MacNieve called to his men, and they promptly charged the enemy with the bayonet. A bitter hand-to-hand struggle followed. The enemy were eager to secure prisoners, and several of them seized Pte. G. Leadbeater and threw him to the ground. One of them knelt on him, and, holding his wrist, called upon him to surrender. Pte. Leadbeater, however, had other ideas. In spite of the blood from a wound in his head, that streamed down his face and half blinded him, he managed to get his right hand free and, drawing his revolver, shot his assailants dead in quick succession.

The bayonet fight still went on. The enemy outnumbered the Canadian party, and fought like seasoned troops. Through the rattle of machine-gun fire came the clash of steel on steel and the shrieks of the stricken as the bayonet went home and twisted in their vitals. At last, after a number of the Germans had been bayoneted and several of the Canadians had fallen, the enemy began to withdraw, and Sergt. MacNieve decided that the time had come to follow suit. Getting together what men he could, he commenced to evacuate the wounded and move out. Just then another body of Germans emerged from a nearby dugout and began to attack MacNieve's party. Once more the raiders charged

the enemy with the bayonet, and again a short but sharp hand-to-hand fight ensued. The enemy refused to surrender, and stood against the raiders until the last man was bayoneted. By this time the specified period of occupancy of the German positions had expired, and the survivors of No. 4 Party hastened back to the Battalion lines, carrying their wounded with them.

Meanwhile No. 5 Party had come upon a new trench line which was being dug parallel to the main street of the village and on the north-western side of the road. Paying but little attention to this trench, the party went on. Suddenly a number of Germans climbed out of the trench and ran towards the church in the village. Lieut. Bannan ordered his Lewis gun into action, and most of the enemy were cut down by its fire. He then led some of his men back to the newly-dug trench. Here a number of Germans were discovered lying along the trench bottom, apparently feigning death. Lieut. Bannan called upon them to get up and surrender; but they neither moved nor answered and were shot where they lay with the exception of two, who climbed out and surrendered when the firing commenced. This incident, like many other occurrences during the war, was most peculiar and inexplicable, as men in such circumstances will usually either surrender or die fighting, and not just lie still to be shot.

While this curious event was taking place, Cpl. Park and the remainder of No. 5 Party had made contact with a pill-box located in a shell hole. From this bombs were hurled at the raiders; but when Cpl. Park and his men closed in upon the post its occupants climbed out and ran away. A trench mortar located at this point was destroyed by a Stokes' bomb, and the men then went on to attack another enemy post further along the main street. Into this skirmish came Lieut. Bannan and his detachment from the incident of the newly-dug trench, and a general melee followed, with the men using rifles and bombs. Five prisoners were eventually captured at this point; but here again the enemy put up a stout resistance before yielding, and only surrendered after the majority of the party had been put out of action. Indeed, a feature of all the fighting during the whole raid was the stubbornness shown by the Germans; in no case did they readily surrender, and the small number of prisoners secured is an index of the determination with which the enemy resisted.

While this skirmish was in progress the Lewis gunners had prepared their weapon for action. Hardly had they done so when some 15 of the enemy broke across the street and made off in the direction in which B Company was operating. The machine gun opened fire upon them, and hardly a man escaped.

At this moment Lieut. Bannan looked at his watch. Time was up; and he gave the order to withdraw. The retirement was made by way of the Orchard, and from the right an enemy machine gun came into action just as the men were getting away. So severe was its fire that the raiding party had to make its escape by a series of dashes from shell hole to shell hole.

In spite of the enemy's machine guns the "moppers-up" and sappers with C Company were successful in evacuating the wounded. Parties Nos. 1, 2 and 4 made many trips over the rough ground in front of the Battalion lines in face of the enemy's fire and the stick bombs hurled at them from the higher ground and the banks on either side of the road.

As a result of the raid one machine gun was captured, and eleven prisoners were taken, three being wounded. In addition a trench mortar was destroyed, an observation post blown up and other damage done to the enemy positions. The casualties inflicted by the raiders could not be accurately determined, but they were undoubtedly considerably heavier than those inflicted by the enemy upon the raiders. The latter had six men killed and 35 wounded, the majority only slightly, while two men were missing and presumed to be dead. In addition two officers, Capt. W. N. Graham and Lieut. J. O'Harra, were wounded, the former dying within a few hours.

IV.

At shortly after midnight on May 22nd the 31st Battalion left the line and proceeded to divisional reserve at the Hut Camp, Wailly. Two days later the Brigade Sports were held in fine weather, and proved a great success. Among those present upon this occasion were the Commander of the VI. Corps, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Aylmer Haldane, K.C.B.; the Divisional Commander, Major-Gen. H. E. Burstall; Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., and members of their respective staffs. Notwithstanding the fact that the 31st Battalion had only just returned from a tour in the line, during

which it had made a successful raid, the men of the Alberta Regiment put up a fine showing in the athletic events and won the cup presented by the Y.M.C.A. for the unit gaining the greatest number of points in the day's competitions. On the following day, announcement was made to the effect that R.Q.M.S. Fairley and Company Sergt.-Major O'Neil had been mentioned in despatches for valuable service.

On May 27th a special performance was organized by the 6th Brigade Staff in the theatre at Saulty. Ten officers and 300 other ranks from the 31st Battalion proceeded by train to see the number of points in the day's competitions. On the following day at Bretencourt, an important lecture was delivered to all ranks of the Battalion by the Divisional Gas Officer.

On the night of May 28th the 31st Battalion again proceeded forward to brigade reserve, where it took over from the 26th Battalion. Two officers and five N.C.O.'s of the United States Army, who had been attached to the latter unit for instructional purposes, were turned over to the 31st Battalion. On the same day four officers — Lieuts. L. G. Shillinglaw, F. S. Long, W. H. French and W. C. West — with a draft of 32 other ranks reported for duty with the Alberta unit, and two days later Lieut. H. G. Rogers rejoined the Battalion, bringing with him 34 men.

The Brigade positions were at this time organized to considerable depth, with two battalions in the forward area, one in support and the remaining battalion in *réservé* in the "Purple Line." This line was continuous, deep and well protected, and formed a formidable obstacle to enemy attack. In conjunction with the Intermediate Line and the Mercatel Switch, it constituted the main line of resistance or "battle zone" in the event of an enemy break-through, and officers and N.C.O.'s were instructed to reconnoitre the whole of these positions in order to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the topography of the defences.

On May 30th a further addition to the armament of the Battalion arrived, four more Lewis guns being received. This brought the total number of guns with the unit up to 28, while a further 8 guns were expected to arrive in the immediate future. On the last day of the month there was a change in the American personnel, a new party of officers and N.C.O.'s coming in to replace those who had been under instruction.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.

The Turning of the Tide

I.

After having dissipated considerably more than half his available mobile reserves in his two great drives against the British lines in March and April, General Von Ludendorff concentrated all his efforts upon the preparation of a grand offensive against the French armies to the south. The necessity of forcing an early decision was becoming daily more urgent with the gradual disappearance of that superiority of man-power which had given the Germans the initiative; and, after two costly failures, the German General Staff had decided to make a great final effort to wrest victory from the Allies on a scale at least sufficient to force a negotiated peace on terms favourable to the Central Empires.

Already troops from the United States had appeared in the line; and although as yet they were in insufficient numbers to affect the situation, Ludendorff fully appreciated the significance of their presence. By the end of February, 1918, four divisions of the Regular American Army had taken their places at the front, and during the crises of March and April further units, brigaded with British and French troops, had assisted in opposing the German onslaughts. At the end of May there were 500,000 United States' troops in France, of whom some 300,000 were contained in fighting divisions. Of these divisions only a few were fully trained and fit for service; but the training of the balance, and of the rest of the army totalling 2,000,000 of all arms of the service which America proposed to raise, was only a matter of time; and the presence of such an army at this stage in the war would be decisive. In the actual event the war was over before the United States could bring to bear anything approaching the full potential power possessed by this great nation, and it is doubtful if at any time there were sufficient American troops in the fighting line to materially affect the issue; but the growing strength of United States forces

in France was a menace which the German General Staff could not afford to ignore.

Accordingly preparations for a third great blow against the Allied front were pushed forward with all possible speed; and as soon as they were completed, the blow fell.

On May 27th the Germans struck with an enormous preponderance of men and artillery along a wide front between Soissons and Reims. Simultaneously a smaller attack, probably intended as a holding battle rather than as a serious attempt to break through, was launched between Locré and Voornezeele.

The German advance in the main offensive, which came to be known as the Third Battle of the Aisne, was more rapid than it had been in either of the two preceding attacks, and was delivered on a wider front. For six days the assault was continued with unabated violence, energy and success, the huge German forces of infantry, artillery, tanks and other arms operating with the relentless precision of a perfect machine.

The first fierce assault thrust the Allied forces from their strong positions on the California Plateau, and sent them reeling back to the line of the Aisne River. This line was forced after some severe fighting; and by the end of the first day the Allies had fallen back, at the centre, to the line of the Vesle. On the following day the river was crossed by the enemy, who made further progress all along the front of his attack, and particularly southward towards Reims. On the third day of the offensive, May 29th, the onslaught was continued with undiminished vigour and without apparent diminution in the weight of artillery employed. The enemy was held in his southward thrust for Reims, but made progress elsewhere, particularly in the south-west. Soissons was captured, and German outposts had reached Fere-en-Tardenois. At this point the enemy penetration was over 20 miles.

By the night of May 30th the Germans had reached the River Marne, between Dormans and Chateau-Thierry, and on the following day a further advance was made towards the latter place along the north bank of the river. By June 1st the enemy had thrust forward to a maximum depth of 32 miles on a front of some 65 miles. This was a good ten miles more than the advance made in a similar period in the first German thrust towards Amiens, and represented progress at the rate of more than 6 miles

a day. To the south, however, the Allies were still holding the enemy in front of Reims.

On June 2nd the French were driven down the valley of the River Ouroq to the edge of the forest of Villers-Cotterets and the high ground west of Chateau-Thierry. At this point the Allies made a stand. In repeated attacks upon the forest the enemy was repulsed with exceedingly heavy losses. For several days desperate fighting continued in this area, but the enemy was firmly held.

On June 9th the Germans launched a new attack in a southerly direction on a front of 22 miles from Montdidier to Noyon. On the following day Mery, Belloy and St. Maur were in enemy possession, and the French had been driven back along the entire front of the attack for an average distance of over 5 miles; but this was destined to be the last notable German success.

On June 11th the French, supported by large numbers of fast tanks, made a successful counter-attack upon a front of over seven miles and drove the enemy back, with heavy losses, to a point over a mile east of Mery. This success was a small matter in itself; but it marked high-water of the German advances and the point of the turning of the tide.

II.

Meanwhile there had been little change in the conditions upon the front held by the Canadian Corps. The early days of June were marked by considerable artillery activity on both sides, and by a number of raids. On the night of June 1st troops of the 56th British Division carried out a raid on the Canadian flank and captured 25 prisoners and a machine gun; on the following night the 29th Canadian Battalion took six prisoners and two machine guns; and in the early hours of June 3rd detachments of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade on the left flank captured 13 prisoners, one machine gun and a trench mortar.

On June 2nd the 31st Battalion lost one of its original members when Lieut. W. Langtry, M.M., who had been commissioned from the ranks, was transferred to the Instructional Staff of the First Army Scouting School. On the following night the unit relieved the 28th Battalion in the front line, taking over the left sub-sector. The relief was made during a persistent and sustained bombardment of the front-line and support trenches, which so hindered the

operation that it was after one o'clock on the following morning before the trenches had been taken over. Later in the day announcement was made of the award of C.M.G. to Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell in recognition of his valuable services.

During the next few days the positions held by the Battalion were subjected to heavy bombardments by enemy artillery and trench mortars. Huge gaps were daily blown in the parapets, dugouts collapsed and wire was demolished. Every night the men worked to repair the damage, only to see their work destroyed again next day. Both sides also put in a considerable amount of counter-battery work, and artillery duels were of frequent occurrence. Miraculously, in spite of the severity of the enemy's shell fire, casualties in the 31st Battalion were light.

The repeated bombardments, and the heavy work involved in repairing the damage which they caused, rendered an inter-company relief advisable. This was carried out on the night of June 6th, C and D Companies replacing A and B Companies in the front line.

The day of June 7th was rendered memorable by some very heavy artillery exchanges in which guns of all calibres took part. Much damage was done to the trenches, and the wire was cut in many places, while the support positions and the neighbourhood of Battalion Headquarters also came in for a severe shelling.

That night, while working parties sweated over the repair of trenches and demolished wire, Lieut. W. K. Jull took out a fighting patrol in an endeavour to locate and capture an enemy post which had been the cause of some annoyance. The patrol worked forward until near the enemy line. Here it broke up, Lieut. Jull with six men proceeding cautiously towards the supposed position of the post while the rest of the party remained behind. The night was very dark, but ere the little party reached the post its presence was detected by a sentry, who gave the alarm. The garrison immediately commenced to bomb the Canadian detachment, which replied by rushing the post in an effort to capture it. It was, however, too heavily manned, and the attackers were forced to withdraw with its officer and four men wounded. The main body of the patrol covered the retirement of Lieut. Jull's party, and in doing so suffered five casualties. A good indication of the nervousness of the enemy as a result of the recent raids is afforded by the

fact that no sooner had the S.O.S. been sent up than the German artillery brought down a heavy bombardment along the entire front.

On the following night another attempt, led by Lieut. J. H. Gainor, M.C., was made against the same post; but once again the enemy was on the alert, and the patrol was compelled to withdraw.

On June 8th some 70 reinforcements reported to Battalion Headquarters from England; and on the following night, after a quiet day in the line, the unit moved out to Hut Camp, Bretencourt. Two days later officer reinforcements were received in the persons of Lieut. F. E. Haldane and Lieut. W. Whyte, both of whom had seen previous service with the 31st Battalion.

Training, route marches and football filled the next few days, and on the night of June 15th the Battalion again moved forward to the relief of the 26th Battalion. On the way up fire from German heavy artillery caused considerable delay, and was particularly severe at the Agny railway crossing. Eventually the companies managed to slip through, at the cost of four men wounded and a prolonged relief, which was not concluded until 2:20 a.m. on the following day. During the afternoon, 6th Brigade Headquarters at Agny received a visit from the Premiers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where they were met by a party of officers and N.C.O.'s from the several units of the Brigade.

The enemy on the Battalion front was strangely quiet during the days immediately following the relief. He did little shooting, and barely replied to the hammering of the Canadian guns upon Neuville Vitasse. At night patrols were permitted to pass practically without molestation, and were able to confirm the position of posts held by the enemy with a minimum of interference. On one occasion a most dangerous and daring daylight reconnaissance was carried out by Capt. G. S. Robertson, M.C., and Lieut. W. H. Williams with a view to locating assembly positions for an impending raid upon the enemy lines, and to obtain other important information. The reconnaissance was completely successful, and twelve posts, each garrisoned by five men, were immediately established upon the selected assembly positions.

On June 20th the 31st Battalion went into brigade support at Telegraph Hill Switch to train for the proposed raid, which was

to be carried out in considerable strength. Its place in the line was taken over temporarily by the 28th Battalion.

For two days, in drizzling rain, the officers and men of A and D Companies, which had been selected for the operation, practiced over the taped course at Wailly. There were also both day and night patrols into "No Man's Land" in which those who were to take part in the raid carried out some intensive reconnaissance work and made themselves familiar with the ground over which the attack was to take place. In these preliminaries the 28th Battalion rendered great assistance, its patrols engaging the enemy patrols and securing identification on two occasions.

The raid against the Neuville Vitasse defences was to be undertaken by the 27th Battalion on the right and the 31st on the left. In all, 18 officers and 480 other ranks were to take part in the operation, and of these 11 officers and 278 other ranks were to be supplied by the 31st Battalion. This unit was to attack with A Company on the right, under the command of Capt. P. B. R. Tucker and D Company, led by Capt. H. Norris, D.S.O., on the left. The objectives of these two companies embraced the village of Neuville Vitasse from the hedge and line of posts on its south-western outskirts on the right to the sunken road on the left. Lieuts. F. S. Long, W. H. Williams, C. H. Irvine and J. H. Carson accompanied Capt. Tucker as platoon commanders, with 125 other ranks and three Lewis guns. Capt. Norris, with a similar complement of men and Lewis guns, had as platoon leaders Lieuts. F. E. B. Haldane, W. Whyte, L. H. Shillinglaw and J. H. Mee. A report centre at the Sand Pit was in charge of Lieut. R. O. Edgar, with five men.

The equipment carried by the raiding troops consisted of dimmed steel helmet, rifle with blackened bayonet, two bandoliers of small-arms ammunition and four Mills' bombs per man. Stokes' bombs and wire cutters were carried by section leaders. The usual precautions were observed in respect to the removal of all papers, documents and other identification marks, with the exception of the blue patch on the right arm, from the persons of the raiders. A white band, covered by a khaki handkerchief until the moment of attack, was worn on the right arm to distinguish friend from foe.

At 1.45 a.m. on June 23rd 300 drums of gas were projected upon Neuville Vitasse by "J" Special Company, Royal Engineers.

On the night of the raid it was proposed to discharge oil smoke which, it was hoped, the Germans would mistake for gas and, by donning their gas masks, handicap themselves by limited vision. The discharge of the real gas was a necessary prelude to the proposed deception.

At dusk on the evening of June 24th Lieut. J. H. Gainor and the Battalion Scouts commenced to tape the lines of approach and the jump-off positions. Tapes were run out from the saps in the front-line trench to guide the troops through the wire, and other tapes were placed from the jumping-off line back to the front-line trench to guide them in after the withdrawal. Owing to the thick fog prevailing at the time Lieut. Gainor, in spite of his familiarity with the ground, found great difficulty in fixing his position, nevertheless the entire work was completed by midnight.

The night was very quiet as the raiders moved forward to take up their positions. There was no delay or confusion, and the front-line trench was reached without incident, in spite of the dense fog which enshrouded the landscape. At 12.30 a.m. on Thursday, June 25th, the troops moved cautiously forward to the jumping-off line, and half an hour later all were in position and ready for the attack. In another fifteen minutes the oil drums were projecting their smoke; and this, together with the dust of bombardment and counter-bombardment, and the heavy fog, limited vision to a matter of a few yards and made it difficult for the raiders to find their bearings.

Meanwhile the barrage had opened up and was falling upon the enemy's positions. Gray's Group of heavy artillery was making excellent practice upon the wire barriers and entanglements along the Sunken Road; on both flanks 3-inch Stokes' mortars were tearing up the enemy wire; to the north the artillery of the left flanking brigade was firing heavily, adding to the din and creating a diversion calculated to confuse the enemy; the 6th Canadian Trench Mortar Battery, the Mobile Battery of 6th Newtons and the weapons of the 2nd Canadian Machine Gun Battalion all played important parts in the brief but intense barrage that preceded the attack. Fireworks shot skywards from the enemy lines; and when, at zero hour, the raiders commenced to dribble forward to the attack, the retaliatory fire of the German artillery was already falling on the Canadian lines.

III.

The raiders attacked in two waves, each composed of small parties of men under appointed leaders. As soon as the barrage lifted the troops moved forward steadily through the fog and dust and smoke.

On the right A-Company was ably led by Capt. Tucker up to the first objective. Here a hedge covered a trench from which burst after burst of machine-gun fire swept the parties of the attacking troops. This trench was assaulted and successfully cleared, but Lieut. Irvine was killed at point-blank range as he was rushing one of the guns and the Company Commander also was wounded at this point.

In spite of severe cross-fire from the enemy's machine guns, which was rendered less deadly than it might have been on account of the fog, and the retaliatory fire of his artillery, the men of A Company moved forward to the right flank objective. Here the post, which was capable of strong defence, was found to be deserted. Crossing this first objective, Sergt. Watkins led on his section and discovered a cellar from which an officer and three other ranks emerged and surrendered. After having been disarmed, the prisoners were handed over to Pte. McNeil, who was ordered to take them back to the Battalion lines. As soon as the prisoners and their escort were out of sight of the rest of the party, however, the officer suddenly seized Pte. McNeil's rifle while the other three prisoners also closed in upon him. As officer and man struggled for possession of the rifle, the latter managed to fire a shot, killing his prisoner instantly. The other three, seeing their officer fall, made a run for it; but Pte. McNeil succeeded in shooting one of them down and the other two were almost immediately recaptured by another party of the attackers.

By this time the raid had developed into a number of individual engagements, some of them very fierce, between the little parties of Canadians and the enemy, and the clearing of dugouts and cellars had commenced in earnest. Cpl. Weir and his party attacked a large dugout and were fired upon by its garrison. They proceeded to bomb it, the sound of the detonations being mingled with shrieks of agony, followed by silence. Approaching the entrance, the men found the interior of the dugout to be in

flames. Its garrison had been wiped out—bombed or burned to death. Pte. C. W. Townsend had proceeded, in the meantime, to a neighbouring cellar and had called upon the occupants to come out. Receiving no reply, he promptly bombed the place. Upon entering, four Germans were found dead and a fifth was taken prisoner. Cpl. A. Kerr and his party attacked a machine-gun post that was causing trouble and, after a stiff bombing fight, killed the entire crew of five men and captured the gun. All over the raided area similar little skirmishes were taking place.

Southward the right half of A Company, under Lieut. F. S. Long, had also reached its final objective, known as the "Keep," and had established blocks in the trenches running eastward. The "Keep" was found to consist, in the main, of large shell holes, which were unoccupied. There were no dugouts or machine-gun emplacements in the area, although the trenches bore evidence of having had a great deal of labour expended on them. A trench mortar was discovered and, since it could not be removed, it was blown up. One stiff little skirmish developed when Cpls. L. L. Lent and C. E. Bainbridge encountered a strong post and, after a sharp bombing fight, captured its garrison of one officer and five men.

From the right front of the "Keep" German machine guns fired without cessation upon Lieut. Long and his party. Rifle grenades and trench mortar shells, fired on and around the main street of the village, also caused several casualties. The ammunition supply of the captured trench mortar exploded, adding to the tally of the wounded.

Meanwhile another party, under Lieut. J. H. Carson, had run into heavy hostile machine-gun fire from the left, which could not be subdued by the Lewis guns of the raiders. The officer was severely wounded, but refused assistance. He collapsed on the main street, urging on his followers. Cpl. H. E. R. Strachan, of the same party, was badly wounded in the leg by a rifle grenade, but he also refused aid, and continued to lead his men towards the final objective amid the bursting of rifle grenades and the whistle of machine-gun bullets.

As the raiders reached their objective at this point in the attack two sections, one under Cpl. H. G. Smith and the other under Sergt. Thatcher, closed in upon a pill-box strongly held by

the enemy. A violent bayonet fight ensued, in which Sergt. McNair was killed. Sergt. Thatcher was wounded, but managed to shoot down two of the enemy and bayonet several others before he fell. At this instant Cpl. Kerr arrived upon the scene with his party and settled the issue. The surviving Germans were made prisoners, and the raiders commenced to retire. The withdrawal was rendered difficult and hazardous by enemy machine-gun fire which swept gustily over "No Man's Land," but the party eventually reached the Battalion lines with its prisoners and wounded.

There were many acts of individual heroism. Lieut. W. H. Williams attacked an enemy post single handed, killing two of its garrison. Cpl. W. H. Ross assaulted alone a machine-gun position and, in doing so, had an arm blown off by a bursting shell. Pte. Hushagen heard the corporal scream, and, running to his assistance, pulled him down into the corner of a trench. Here the private extemporized a tourniquet from boot laces, and bandaged the arm as best he could. He then slowly and laboriously carried out the fainting N.C.O. through the hostile machine-gun barrage and got him safely into the Battalion lines.

During the withdrawal of the raiding parties, Lieut. Williams observed a movement at a trench junction and, approaching nearer, saw two Germans mounting a machine gun to shoot down the retiring troops. He promptly bombed them, killing both. He then shouldered the gun and returned to his unit.

Meanwhile Lieut. Long, having ordered the withdrawal of his party and seen it well under way, went to search for Lieut. Carson, of whose condition he had been informed. He could find no trace of his wounded comrade, but would not give up the search. Until daylight this officer remained in hostile territory looking for Lieut. Carson. He then assumed that someone else must have taken him out, and returned to the Battalion lines.

The wounded officer, bleeding profusely, had managed in the meantime to crawl away and to make towards the positions of the 31st Battalion. Sometimes fainting, sometimes resting to gather fresh strength in a shell hole, he made his painful way back to the lines, which he reached unassisted, but in a state of complete collapse, at about 4:30 a.m. He died a few days later, a martyr to his own gallantry in refusing to take a man out of the fight when prompt assistance might have saved him.

IV.

While A Company had been thus strenuously engaged, D Company was meeting with equal success. Immediately the barrage came down a covering party crossed the Sunken Road, and took up a position on its north-east side. When the barrage lifted the main body went forward to the attack, and within a few minutes four out of the five officers had become casualties. Capt. Norris, the Company Commander, was badly wounded at the very outset by machine-gun fire, and died a few days later.

On the right of the Company's attack all objectives were reached, but the enemy put up a strenuous defence and refused to give or receive quarter. As a result only two prisoners were taken on this flank. Strong wire entanglements were found covering the final objective, and at this point the fighting was stubborn and prolonged, casualties on both sides being heavy.

The attack along the Sunken Road was ably led by Sergt. F. J. Rodwell. The first wire barrier was negotiated without much difficulty, as the 6-inch howitzers had scored direct hits upon it during the preliminary bombardment and had cut it up considerably. Another barrier, further up the road, was found to be similarly damaged. Here several dugouts and one circular steel surface shelter were found to be strongly manned, and their garrisons put up a strenuous and determined resistance. In spite of severe bombing attacks, the enemy refused to yield, and for a time held up the progress of Sergt. Rodwell's party. Lieut. Mee called to his platoon and ran to the assistance of his N.C.O. The enemy met the new assailants with rifle fire, Lieut. Mee being shot dead and several of his men falling.

Back and forth about the circular iron stronghold the struggle swayed. Then Sergt. Rodwell noticed a window in one end of the shelter. With some difficulty he managed to climb to the top, and hurled a Stokes' bomb through the window, while other members of the party pitched Mills' bombs through the same opening. The post was then entered and searched for documents, eleven German dead being found inside.

The clearing up of the remainder of the dugouts entailed hard and desperate work. The enemy refused to surrender, and had to be subdued by force of arms. The bombing was intensive, and it

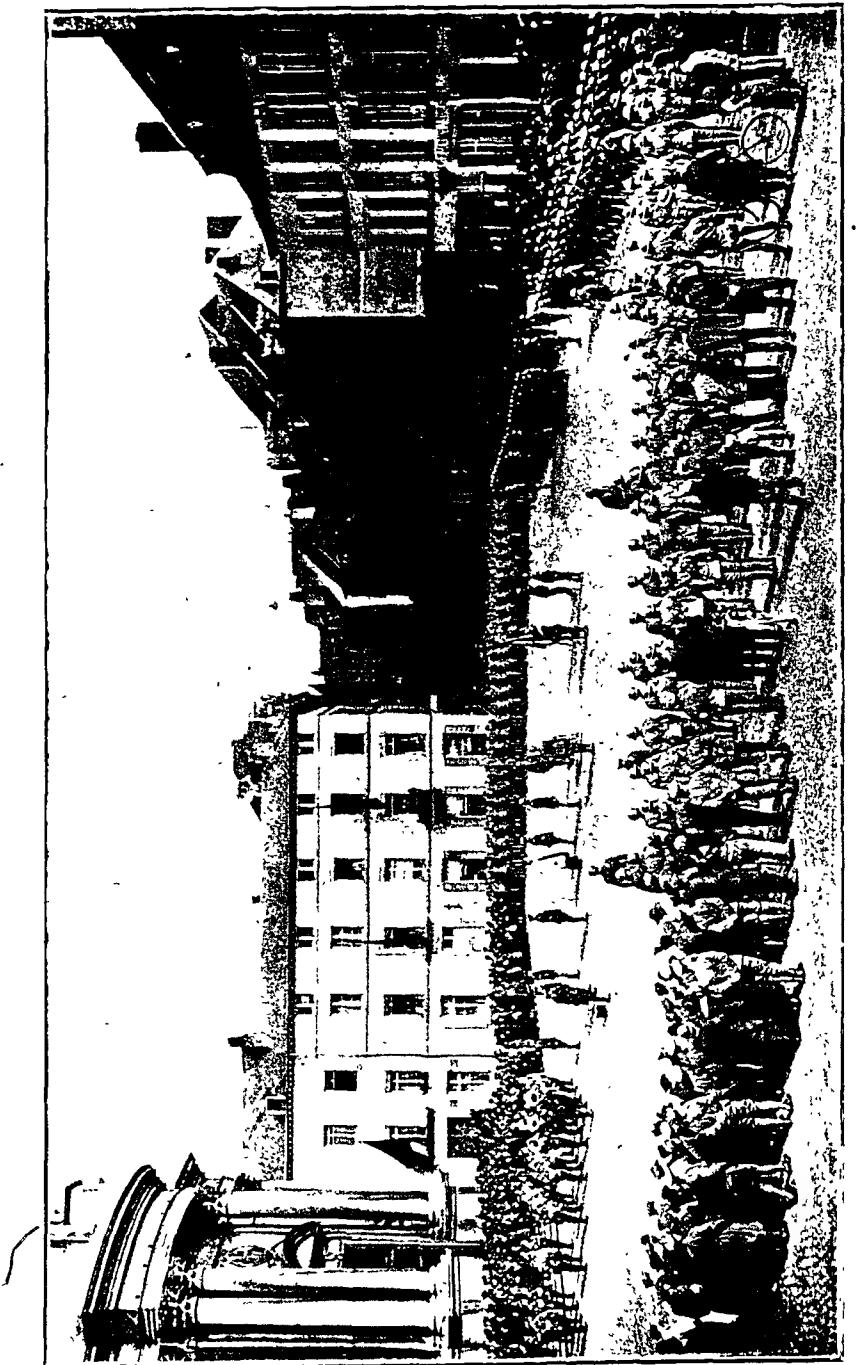
is reported that in the fighting Sergt. Rodwell personally accounted for eighteen of the enemy.

As soon as the work of clearing the dugouts was completed, Sergt. Rodwell and the survivors of his party pushed on rapidly to the cross roads, where Lewis-gun posts were immediately established to cover the approaches. Here Sergt. H. Thompson assembled his little party, and divided it into two sections. One of these consisted of the N.C.O. and Sappers DeWolfe and Nelson, of the 4th Field Company, Canadian Engineers, and the other of Pte. Otterson, of the Scout Section, and Sappers Wilson and McBurney. The first named party went down the left fork of the "Y" roads and the other down the right.

When Sergt. Thompson had covered some 100 yards he ran into a considerable party of the enemy proceeding down the road to reinforce the threatened point beyond the junction of the "Y" roads. The enemy were closely bunched, and presented a good target. Regardless of the fact that he was overwhelmingly outnumbered, Sergt. Thompson ordered his party to open fire upon the Germans. The latter replied with bombs, but not until the rifles had taken considerable toll of their numbers and forced them to deploy hurriedly in the darkness. At this moment the signal to withdraw was made and the party fell back upon Sergt. Rodwell's detachment, which was already moving out.

Meanwhile Lieut. L. C. Shillinglaw and his men had reached their objective in Trench Mortar Lane. Here an intensive search was made for the trench mortar which was known to have been in the vicinity, but no trace of it could be found. Machine guns on the right swept the area, more or less blindly on account of the darkness and fog, but Lieut. Shillinglaw and several men were wounded. From this point Lieut. F. E. B. Haldane led his party down a badly battered trench leading from the right flank of his objective. Enemy machine guns from the right again caught them, but they cleaned up a dug out, taking two prisoners, and established a block in the trench. At this juncture Lieut. Haldane was wounded, but he stayed with his men until the signal to withdraw was given.

Under the protection of a strong covering patrol, the retirement of all parties was successfully carried out. The wounded were evacuated, at considerable hazard to the stretcher bearers and their comrades of the raiding parties who helped them in through



Presentation of colours to 31st Battalion at Namur, Belgium, 1919, in front of Namur Cathedral.



the hostile shell and machine-gun fire, and the prisoners were brought back.

One other incident of the raid is worthy of record. Lieut. J. H. Gainor, M.C., having completed his task of taping the jumping-off line, accompanied the raiders upon their dangerous mission. With him he took a long pole carrying a Canadian ensign. On this was pinned a translation into German of a General Headquarters telegram announcing an Austrian defeat. Pinned also to the ensign was a message in English which read:

"To the O. C. No. 10 Company, 3rd Battalion I. R. Next time we raid you we will go through to your Battalion Headquarters. The morale of your Company is damned rotten."

The pole was planted and left in the most conspicuous spot which could be found in Neuville Vitasse.

All things considered, this raid of the 31st Battalion must be regarded as an outstanding success. During the day which followed the raid observers in the front line saw over 100 German dead evacuated to the rearward area. One officer and 21 other ranks were taken prisoner, two machine guns were captured and one trench mortar was destroyed. Of the raiding troops three officers and 13 other ranks were killed and four officers and 39 other ranks were wounded, while six men were missing. Of the wounded officers, two subsequently died from the injuries they had received. On the right the 27th Battalion had also met with a large measure of success; and the work of the two battalions of the Canadian West on that foggy morning gave the enemy a foretaste of that which he was going to receive at the hands of the Dominion troops in the near future.

General Sir Julian Byng, General Officer Commanding the Third British Army, in a congratulatory letter to the 27th and 31st Battalions, wrote as follows:—

"Neuville Vitasse has been the scene of many daring and successful enterprises by the 2nd Canadian Division, but I think this, their final one, eclipses all others.

"The very careful and thorough preparation led to a most daring exploit, in which leadership of Commanders and determination of other ranks stand out for commendation.

"This excellent account of the raid is fine reading, and the operation is a splendid finish to the work of this Division with VI. Army Corps.

"J. Byng,
"General"

V.

The day which had been ushered in by this early-morning raid was spent in well-earned rest. The enemy was inactive, except for a periodical shelling of Agny, Bearurains and Wailly, and remained quiet for the next two days. On the way out two men were wounded by enemy shell fire. At 5:00 p.m. on June 29th the Battalion entrained at Taunton Dump for the Army Rest Area at Izel Lez Mameau, and reached its billets at about 10 o'clock that night.

Monday, July 1st, was Dominion Day, and was observed as a holiday by all the battalions in reserve. The men of the 31st Battalion marched over to Tinques, where the Corps Sports were held. In these the Battalion participated, but with what success the War Diary does not record. Good weather favoured the event, at which the Duke of Connaught, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden and the Rt. Hon. A. Meighan were present.

On the following day the 6th Brigade was inspected at Givenchy le Noble by the Corps Commander, Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. W. Currie, who was accompanied by Sir Robert Borden and the Hon. J. A. Calder, Canadian Minister of Immigration and Colonization. The Brigade was formed up in the usual hollow square, and after the inspection the Canadian Prime Minister addressed the officers. The Corps Commander took the saute as the battalions marched past at the conclusion of the parade.

During the days which followed the mornings were devoted to training and the afternoons to sports and recreations. On July 4th Lieuts. G. Lawson, M.C., A. R. Leek, M.M., H. Shillam, W. C. West, M.M., J. C. M. Carson and P. Hunter reported to the 31st Battalion for duty, and were posted to their companies. Of these, the first two named were original members of the unit, and the remaining four had all seen previous service with the men of Alberta.

The entire day of July 9th was spent on the ranges. As a result of the inter-platoon competitions, No. 12 Platoon of C Company, which was declared the winner, was selected to represent the 31st Battalion in the Corps Championship. On the same day the Battalion Snipers and the Scout Section entered for the Brigade Shooting and Intelligence Competition at Pernes, and won the shooting contest by the wide margin of 150 points. Lieut. E. Neil, with 9 other ranks, reported for duty on this date. Five days later Hon. Capt. G. Wright, of the Chaplain Service, arrived at Battalion Headquarters and was attached to the unit.

On July 15th the Battalion marched out of Izel les Hameau and proceeded into divisional reserve at Dainville. Here enemy aircraft made things a little unpleasant, but caused no casualties in the 31st Battalion. While at Dainville the Alberta unit was reinforced by four more officers and ten men from the base. Of the officers — Lieuts. A. McCormick, M.M.; N. W. Bradley; J. S. P. Guy and D. M. McKenzie, M.M. — the first named had left Canada with the unit and had been promoted from the ranks, while the others had all seen previous service.

Canadian pressmen arrived in the Corps Area on July 20th, and in the morning W. A. Buchanan, M.P., editor of the "Lethbridge Herald," who was subsequently made a senator, visited his brother, Lieut. R. W. Buchanan, of the 31st Battalion. He was accompanied by Major P. J. Montague, and spent most of the day in the Battalion lines.

While the Brigade remained at Dainville, route marches and tactical exercises were carried out, which were sometimes interrupted by the periodic shelling of long-range German guns. By this time the offensive power of the enemy had worn itself out in unfruitful assaults against the Allied line, and the time for the Entente Powers to strike was rapidly approaching. Everyone in the British forces, from the Commander-in-Chief to the soldier in the line, hoped that the days of trench warfare were nearing an end, and training in open tactics was already being proceeded with.

Most of the last week of the month of July was spent by the 31st Battalion at Grand Rullecourt, west of Arras, in intensive training. The weather was warm, but extremely wet, and most of the time the men were drenched to the skin. Before the end of the month news was received that the Germans had commenced

to retire from the huge salient which they had driven into the French line north of the Marne, and that Fere-en-Tardenne had been re-occupied by the French. For the Central Powers the ebb of the tide had commenced.

At midnight, on July 29th, the 31st Battalion left Grand Rullecourt for Frevent, marching via Liencourt and Rebreuviette to entrain for Ailly-sur-Somme. At the time nobody knew the reason of the move nor the ultimate destination. The Canadian Corps had commenced to converge, with the utmost secrecy and caution, upon that field of battle where the German line was destined to be broken and from which the enemy was to be hurled back to ultimate defeat.

At 5:30 a.m., on July 30th, the 31st Battalion entrained at Frevent. Ailly-sur-Somme was reached before noon, and two hours later the unit marched out for billets at Clairy Saulchoix.

The early days of August were occupied by intensive training, route marches, lectures and demonstrations. Everything that was possible was done to perfect officers and men in the tactics of the new type of warfare which was confidently anticipated. All officers and other ranks on leave, or on courses of instruction, were recalled to the Battalion, and other preparations for the desperate fighting which lay ahead were pressed forward.

On Sunday, August 4th, the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war by Great Britain, church parade was held at 10:00 a.m. It was destined to be the last religious service of the Battalion for some considerable time; and, for many that attended it, the last of all. By 9 o'clock that evening the march from Clairy Saulchoix towards Amiens had commenced.

That night the men found quarters in a factory at Salouel. Here orders were received that all future movements were to be made under cover of darkness. The day following was spent, for the most part, in resting and in the issue of new clothing and equipment. That evening the 27th Battalion marched in from the north and was billeted with the 31st in the factory.

Early on the following morning, August 6th, maps, aerial photographs and detailed instructions relative to the coming operations were received. Shortly afterwards the Battalion Commander, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty, attended a conference at Brigade Headquarters. Upon his return to the Battalion he called

the company officers and gave them details of the coming movements of the unit and of the subsequent operations.

As dusk fell that evening the 31st Battalion left Salouel and proceeded, under cover of the darkness, to the concentration area in the vicinity of Tronville Wood at Blangy, some distance east of Amiens. The route followed ran via Boutilerie, Cagny, the Cagny River crossing and along the south side of the railway to Manor Copse, where the men bivouacked.

All the next day the men lay hidden in the copse. The morning was misty and the afternoon close, dull and cloudy; but the men were in high spirits at the prospect of the coming battle and confident of the result. Most of the day was spent in studying maps and discussing details of the proposed operations. Major C. B. Hornby and Lieut. E. Neil proceeded forward during the morning to reconnoitre the approaches to the assembly area, and by nightfall the Battalion had completed its preparations for the coming offensive.

Under cover of darkness large numbers of tanks moved up and took station in advance of the infantry. The noise of their engines was covered by low-flying aeroplanes. Cavalry, with high hopes that at last they were about to fulfil their function, took up the positions allotted to them. Innumerable batteries made preparation for the morning barrage. The night was filled with furtive and secret movement as the forces of the British Empire prepared for the morrow. Many eyes strained eastward to catch the first light of the dawn which would unleash the waiting troops.

VI.

Never had the morale of the Canadian Corps been better, nor its spirits higher, than at this particular time. A long series of successful raids had given the men a measure of the enemy, and had filled them with confidence in their ability to meet and beat the Germans anywhere and at any time. Behind them was a long record of successful engagements, defensive and offensive, from the great stand of the 1st Division at Ypres in the Second Battle to the successful storming of Passchendaele Ridge; before them was the prospect of still greater achievements, and the hope that at long last the deadly monotony of trench warfare would soon be ended.

Officers, N. C. O.'s and men alike were determined to smash the German line and confident in their ability to do so.

Practically every unit of the Corps was at full strength and many were over strength. Most of the battalions carried a hundred men or more above war establishment. In numbers the Corps was almost the equal of some of the British armies of this time. The field engineering companies had been reorganized and greatly augmented, and converted into engineer battalions; and an engineer brigade, consisting of 118 officers and 2,995 other ranks, was formed in each division. In this reorganization the personnel of the field companies had been augmented by the 2nd, 107th, 123rd and 124th Pioneer Battalions and the 1st and 2nd Tunnelling Companies, aggregating nearly 5,000 men. Another battalion of machine gunners had been added to the Machine Gun Corps; an engineer motor transport, which could "go anywhere and do anything," had been organized and the number of railway construction troops had been greatly increased. Never before had the Canadian Corps been so strong, so well organized or so supremely reliant upon its strength.

The assembly of this great force in front of Amiens had been carried out with the utmost secrecy. Units had approached by night only, and by devious ways; some by train, some by bus and some on foot. Arrived in the area, they had remained carefully hidden in copse and woodland, awaiting the hour to strike.

Weeks before all ranks had become aware that some offensive move was planned in which they were to play a part. To prevent any inadvertent leakage of the truth to the enemy through a captured Canadian or any other channel; rumours were skillfully spread from Corps Headquarters that once again the men of the Dominion were to fight in that famous Canadian area before Ypres. To support this rumour two battalions — the 27th and the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles — were sent north just before the gathering of the rest of the Corps on the Amiens front. They entered the line near Kemmel, and steps were taken to insure their identification by the enemy. This piece of "camouflage" appears to have deceived everyone, even the acute war correspondents, and certainly the enemy.

The Canadian Corps was to be the spear-head of the great and final offensive in the West. Of all the troops under the command of

that great French soldier, General Foch, the men of the Dominion had been selected for this single honour. To this end had they been saved, ready and available to meet any desperate emergency, throughout the fighting of the spring and early summer. No such emergency had arisen, and although hard pressed, Foch had managed to keep the Canadian Corps intact, fresh and thoroughly trained, for the work he had in view; it was the trump card which the French general had retained until the moment came to play it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Battle of Amiens

I.

The British attack in front of Amiens undoubtedly came as a complete surprise to the German General Staff. Its Intelligence was fully appraised of the comparative weakness of the forces at the disposal of Sir Douglas Haig. The enormous drain of manpower which had resulted from the continuous British offensives of 1917 was well known; equally well known were the losses inflicted by the two great German offensives against the British line in the spring. In these battles some 500,000 British infantry had been opposed to three times that number of the enemy, backed by a heavy preponderance of artillery; and, although the line had not been broken, the cost of holding it had been extremely heavy. The strength of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth British Armies had been seriously impaired, and they had become composite aggregations of veterans with green troops who had little or no experience of warfare. Many of their divisions were, moreover, still under strength. Only the First Army, in its position in and around Vimy Ridge, was still more or less intact.

In spite of the three great and fruitless efforts to break through on the west, Hindenburg, who had succeeded Ludendorff to the supreme command, had no apprehension of immediate disaster. Neither did he admit, at this time, that the initiative had definitely passed out of his hands. He expected, and hoped for, a large-scale Allied offensive, in full anticipation of scoring a great defensive victory and of weakening the forces opposed to him. Such a victory would have enabled him to resume the initiative with an offensive against the north of the Allied line and the Channel ports. What he did not expect, however, was that the attack would be launched by the weakened British forces, and particularly by the Fourth Army, which was known to have suffered very heavy casualties earlier in the year.

General Rawlinson, in command of the Fourth Army in and around Amiens, had to face the problem of concentrating in great local strength without warning the enemy. From the First Army he borrowed the Canadian Corps and placed it alongside the Australians. This, in itself, did not give the additional strength required to smash the German line. The Australian brigades, which had been holding for weeks the approaches to Amiens on the north of the Somme, were therefore withdrawn, and their places taken by London and Sussex troops. Instead, however, of going back for rest these Australian units crossed the river and increased the depth and strength of the Australian forces in and around Villers Bretonneaux. Within a week, and upon a front of little more than ten miles, a force consisting of 14 infantry divisions, 3 cavalry divisions, some 2,000 guns and 450 tanks was successfully concentrated without alarming the enemy.

The confidence of the German General Staff that no serious attack could be launched by the supposedly weak Fourth Army played right into the hands of General Rawlinson. The Germans had held their positions in front of Amiens for four months, but in that time little work had been done in the way of consolidation. For the most part the defences consisted of discontinuous trenches, organized shell holes with machine guns, strong points and the fortification of such natural obstacles to advancing troops as the topography of the country afforded. Contrary to the usual German habit, comparatively little wiring had been done.

Another factor favourable to British plans was the weather. For once this turned traitor to its friend, the enemy, and gave its co-operation to the Allies. Rain had fallen steadily on all but the last of the four days preceding the attack, effectively screening the final preparations. Then, on the day before the assault, the rain ceased, allowing the ground to dry. On the morning of the attack a thick summer fog blanketed the country-side during the early stages of the battle. This hid the movements of troops and tanks, and made the cost in casualties to the assaulting battalions much smaller than it would otherwise have been. On the other hand, by masking targets, it proved of some handicap to the artillery. On account of their hurried concentration less than half of the British guns had been registered, and were compelled to fire blindly as a result.

Before the attack the Allied line to the south-east of Amiens followed the valley of the River Avre as far as Moreuil. Thence it turned northward, crossing the River de Luce near Hangard. About a mile south of Villers-Bretonneux it again turned north-east, passing in front of that village and thence northward to Albert.

The Canadian Corps was concentrated on a front of some 5 miles from a point just south of the River de Luce to the Amiens-Chaulnes railway, which formed the northern Corps boundary. The attack was to be pressed in a direction approximately east-south-east, and following roughly the line of the river.

The initial assault was to be made with the 2nd Division on the left, the 1st Division in the centre and the 3rd Division on the right, with the 4th Division in close support. Beyond the railway, on the left of the 2nd Division, were the troops of the 5th Australian Division, while to the south of the 3rd Division was the light infantry of General Brissaud-Desmaillet, of the First French Army. Northward of the Australians the line was held by British divisions of the Fourth Army.

The ground over which the 2nd Division was to attack has been described as:—

“A rolling plateau, the greater part of which had been cultivated in the early part of the year, and, at the time of the attack, was covered by crops of standing grain. On the right of the divisional area lay the valley of the River Luce, from which re-entrants of varying size ran back into the plateau.”

“The line from which the attack was launched was just on the reverse slope of a small ridge which crossed the plateau from north to south, but once this ridge had been passed there was practically no more cover except in the woods and valleys.”

“On our side of the front line there was a deep valley immediately south-west of Villers Bretonneux, one branch of which ran in a southerly and one in a south-easterly direction, and in which a certain amount of cover from ground observation could be obtained.”

“West of Villers Bretonneux the Bois L’Abbe and Bois d’Aquinne were capable of concealing a large number of

troops, but as these woods had been frequently subjected to gas shelling, it was considered advisable to forbid the use of them for assembly purposes."

"South of the Bois L'Abbe, and consequently in rear of our right, there is a long open slope on which stands the village of Cachy, and which, though under observation, was the only ground available for our use owing to the number of troops to be concentrated behind us."

"In the enemy's territory lay the villages of Marcelcave, Wiencourt and Guillaucourt, each of which afforded a certain amount of cover, the Bois de Hangard and Bois de Morgemont, which is five hundred yards east of the former, on our right, and finally the ravines which led from the River Luce towards Wiencourt, Guillaucourt and Harbonniers."

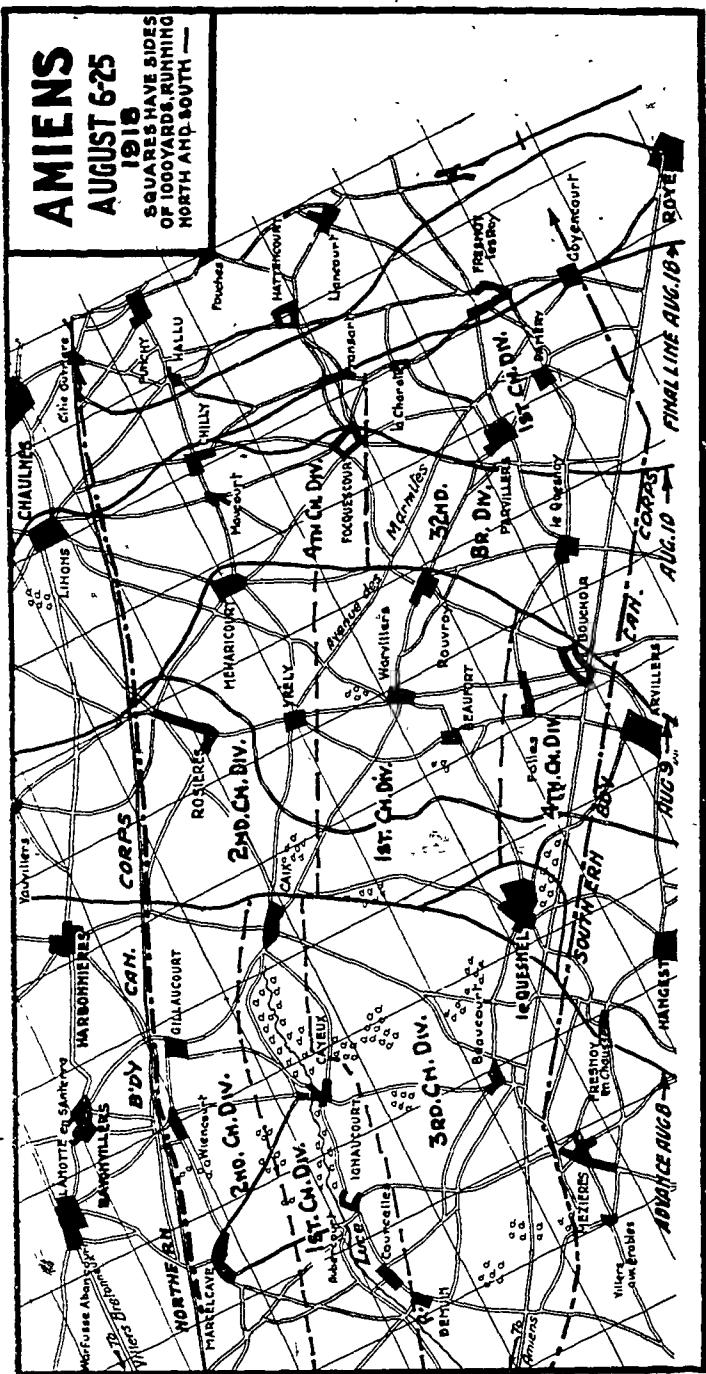
The advance of the 1st Division followed roughly the line of the River de Luce. The river valley was wooded, and marshy along its lower levels. It could only be crossed at intervals, and provided good cover for German machine guns. From the river little ravines cut north and south into the higher ground on either side.

The country in front of the 3rd Division was largely cultivated, and was interspersed with patches of woodland. At the time of the attack crops were ripe in the fields, and in the gardens and orchards fruit was rapidly maturing under the summer sun.

The morning of August 8th was ushered in by a brief but terrific bombardment of the German advanced positions. Every gun that would bear crashed into sudden and furious action, firing as fast as its crew could work it. From either flank of the front of attack British and French artillery joined in the inferno of din and devastation. Along twenty miles of the Allied line guns of every calibre flashed and thundered.

The barrage, although of but short duration, was, in spite of the mist, terribly destructive. Most of the German defensive works to a considerable depth were obliterated entirely or badly damaged. Then the guns lengthened their range and the tanks and infantry went forward.

The objectives of the attack were known as the "Blue," "Red" and "Green" lines. Owing to the depth of the planned advance, the last-named lay at the extreme range of the artillery. The "Red



Line" lay yet further ahead. This was the most important objective of the day, as it constituted the jumping-off position for the attack on the "Blue Line." In order to cover the advance of the infantry beyond the protection of the artillery barrage a number of tanks was allotted to each brigade.

By 4:30 a.m. the 2nd Division had commenced to move, with the 4th Brigade advancing to the attack. It was accompanied by some 28 tanks which, screened by the mist from hostile artillery, did excellent work in subduing hostile machine-gun posts. By 6 o'clock the Brigade had reached the outskirts of Marcelcave; and an hour later, after some stubborn fighting, the village was in the hands of the 19th and 21st Battalions, which immediately proceeded to consolidate.

The 6th Brigade commenced its forward march at 5:40 a.m. At this time the 18th Battalion of the 4th Brigade was engaged in clearing Morgemont Wood, a mile or so in advance of the jumping-off line. The 28th and 29th Battalions led the advance, with the 31st in close support and the 27th following in its immediate rear.

The 31st Battalion moved forward with C Company on the right and D Company on the left, supported by A and B Companies. Transport Echelon A, consisting of Lewis-gun limbers, water supply, ammunition, etc., closely followed the supporting companies.

Through the stir and ordered confusion of battle the Battalion advanced steadily. From its front, through the thinning mist, came the staccato rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire, where the lines of khaki-clad infantry were steadily pushing into German territory. Here and there the red flash of bursting shells glowed for an instant through the fog, and winked out in brown columns of up-flung earth and dust. All along the divisional front clouds of cavalry were already on the move, and already in the rear guns were being hauled forward into new positions. Over the uneven ground tanks lurched and rolled, firing as they advanced, while in the air British pilots swooped and turned, bombing and machine-gunning the retiring Germans.

At 7:45 a.m. the Battalion reached Morgemont Wood, which, by this time, had been cleared of the enemy. Here its frontage was increased, B Company coming into the line on the right of C Company. Up to this point mist, fog and smoke had hidden

movement, with the result that enemy gun fire, although heavy, had not been very effective, and casualties had been few.

At Morgemont Wood the Battalion halted to await further orders. These were received at 8:30 a.m., and the approach march was continued to a line on the western outskirts of Marcelcave.

This line was reached by 10:00 a.m...and here once again the 31st Battalion rested, awaiting orders, until 12 noon. It then proceeded, still in the same formation, with three companies in the line and one in support, until it reached Guillaucourt. Here, on the east of the village, it extended in a line from north to south while the Brigade formed up to go into action.

At this point the front of attack of the 2nd Division extended from the Amiens-Chaulness railway on the north to the River de Luce, a distance of about 2000 yards. Long ere this the fog had lifted, but smoke and dust still limited visibility. In addition to this, the Canadian attack had over-run all but the rearward gun positions of the enemy. So complete had been the surprise and so rapid the advance that battery after battery of field guns and howitzers had been captured, many of them before they were able to go into action. For the time being the German artillery had ceased to be a factor of primary importance in the battle.

So far the operation had progressed according to plan. The 4th Brigade had pressed its attack to the east of Marcelcave. Here the 5th Brigade had gone through it, and had fought forward, capturing Wiencourt and Guillaucourt, and establishing position on high ground approximately 1000 yards east of the latter village. The total advance of the 2nd Division up to this point in the battle exceeded five miles, and the "Green" and "Red Line" objectives had been secured.

With the 6th Brigade was a company of the 14th Battalion Tank Corps and a company of the 2nd Battalion Canadian Machine Gun Corps. The function of this force was to act as divisional reserve in close support of the 4th and 5th Brigades during their respective advances. In the event of these brigades reaching their objectives, the 6th Brigade was to resume the divisional attack and advance upon the old Amiens defence line from Caix northward, which was known as the "Blue Line." Should such an advance prove feasible, the 6th Brigade was to be supported by all the artillery available.

By this time the attack had penetrated beyond the reach of all the guns except those of the longest range. Certain elements of the Canadian Divisional Artillery had pressed forward, however, in the wake of the advancing infantry, and some of these were near enough to give a limited artillery support. With the successful completion of the second phase of the advance—the capture of the line in front of Guillaucourt—Canadian cavalry and armoured cars had gone through to seize the old Amiens defence line and hold on until the 6th Brigade was able to get forward and consolidate it. Thereafter the cavalry was to send forward patrols to secure and maintain touch with the enemy.

At 2:30 p.m. the 6th Brigade moved forward to carry out the third phase of the operations. As originally disposed, the Brigade had the 28th Battalion on the right and the 29th on the left, with the 31st Battalion in support and the 27th in reserve. The 31st Battalion deployed into battle formation for its advance over open ground and down the reverse slope of the ridge. This manœuvre could not be concealed from the enemy, and it was necessary to move with the utmost celerity in order to minimize the effects of hostile machine-gun and rifle fire. Owing to some misunderstanding the advance of the 28th Battalion was delayed. As, under the circumstances, any loss of time might have serious results, the Brigadier sent orders to the 31st Battalion to take the place of the 28th on the right of the line, the latter unit assuming the support position.

German machine-gunners were making, at this time, desperate efforts to beat down the attack, but the 31st Battalion took station calmly and without confusion on the right flank of the divisional frontage, and the advance commenced.

Apart from the machine-gunners, the German infantry put up but little fight. Their lines were broken, and their positions over-run. The artillery still showed some activity, however, and as the 6th Brigade advanced over the open ground it was shelled by 5.9-in. guns from rearward positions.

By 7:15 p.m. the 31st Battalion had reached the "Blue Line." B Company, on the right, had outposts pushed well forward in advance of the position, and had established contact with the 10th Battalion of the 1st Division. C Company, in the centre, was digging in and consolidating the line. On the left D Company

had its outposts 500 yards in advance of the main positions, and was in touch with the 28th Battalion, while A Company remained in battalion support. Stubborn machine-gun resistance from the light railway had held up the 29th Battalion which had, however, pushed forward as far as circumstances permitted. At this same point the 9th Hussars had also been held in check, and were withdrawn as soon as the 6th Brigade had taken up its position.

III.

Meanwhile the 1st Division had driven forward along the line of the River de Luce, and was well up to the 2nd Division by nightfall. Launching its attack from a front of nearly two miles, it had taken in turn Aubercourt, Ignaucourt and Cayeux. Then, on a frontage reduced to a bare 1200 yards, it had gone on to capture Caix, and to establish its position some three quarters of a mile beyond the village. It had met with some stubborn resistance, particularly in the woods above Hangard, which were only cleared after fierce bayonet fighting; but nothing that day could stop the veteran division of the Canadian Corps, and in spite of the difficulty of the country it had to negotiate, it was never far behind the other divisions.

To the south the 3rd Division launched its attack upon a wider front than its sister divisions, the average width of its advance being about 2 miles. At the very outset it met with some of the heaviest and most unexpected fighting of the day upon the high ground at Hourges. This high ground dominated the lines of communication of the Canadian Corps along a considerable section of the front, and it was essential to the success of the operation that the enemy should be driven out. For a time the advance was held up at this point, but the determination of the Canadians was not to be denied. Supported by a strong indirect machine-gun barrage, troops of the 52nd Battalion (from Port Arthur) and the 58th (Central Ontario) carried the position with the bayonet, but only at heavy cost. The 3rd Division then went on to capture Demuin, and from this point went forward without serious opposition to within a thousand yards of Beaucourt. At this point the 4th Division went through it and, pressing its attack energetically, had reached a line just short of Quesnel before the end of the day.

Quite early in the battle—as soon, in fact, as the enemy lines had been pierced and their garrisons were definitely in retreat—the cavalry had raced forward with a number of armoured cars, whippet tanks and even motor lorries carrying mobile machine-gun crews with their weapons. Machine-gun nests, which meant death to mounted troops, were attacked and subdued by the swift little tanks; artillery batteries, deadly to tanks, were charged and captured by the cavalry. On the left, elements of the Canadian Cavalry Corps reached the outskirts of Rosieres, where they were checked by shell and machine-gun fire. By the approaches to Roye other units came under heavy fire, and were forced to withdraw. Near Rosieres a troop, in attempting most gallantly to ride over a machine-gun nest, were wiped out almost to a man. Throughout the later stages of the battle the cavalry rendered invaluable service by harrying the retreating Germans and preventing them from rallying in strength to meet the advancing infantry; and all day British aeroplanes flew over German territory, bombing and machine-gunning concentrations of hostile troops and reporting their movements to British Headquarters.

The day of August 8th—a day glorious in the annals of Canadian history—ended with every objective of the “Blue Line,” except Quesnel on the 4th Divisional front, in the hands of the troops of the Dominion. The average advance during the day had been fully six miles on a front of five miles, while in the centre the 1st Division had penetrated nearly eight miles into enemy territory from its jumping-off line. Over 5000 enemy prisoners and 161 guns (not counting trench artillery and machine guns) had been captured. Considering the magnitude of the success achieved, and the heavy casualties inflicted upon the enemy, the Canadian losses had been light.

It was not, however, in the depth of the advance nor upon the men and material taken that the glory of the day primarily rested. The Canadian success was memorable chiefly on account of the fact that it was the first of a long series of Allied victories which ended, three months later, in the complete defeat of the enemy, and, more important still, it was instrumental in rendering such victories possible. As an Allied historian had written:

“On the immediate passage of the Luce depended, on the one side, the length and value of the Australian drive, and

on the other side, the entrance into action of the French First, Third and Tenth Armies. Canada unlocked the gate through which the Germans were driven out of France."

IV.

To the north of the Canadian Corps the 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions continued the line of attack, and beyond them the III British Corps formed the left flank of the advance of the Fourth Army. At first the Australians went forward rapidly, meeting with little resistance, and by 7:30 a.m. had reached the Germans' heavy gun positions. By noon, still progressing rapidly and without serious opposition, the 5th Australian Division, which had gone through the 2nd Division, had driven to a maximum depth of nine miles into the hostile lines. At their point of maximum penetration the Australians were now in advance of the 2nd Canadian Division, rapid though the advance of the latter had been.

At midday the infantry opened out, and British tanks, armoured cars and cavalry went through. Soon a train carrying away a railway gun was captured; then another train bringing up reinforcements. Later a German Corps Commander and his Staff were surprised; the Staff was captured and its chief escaped in his shirt sleeves. A number of enemy troops, lunching peacefully in a village (and supposed security) some fifteen miles behind their original front, were astounded by the sudden appearance of British cavalry, and were prisoners before they had recovered from the shock. At the close of the day the Australian main positions ran approximately from the neighbourhood of Cerisy towards Proyart, Rainecourt and Lihons Ridge, near Chaulnes.

To the south of the Canadian Corps the First French Army made no move during the early stages of the battle, but contented itself with bombarding the German lines for some 40 minutes after the attack had been launched. Until the enemy positions on the River Avre had been turned by the troops of the Dominion, any advance in this region would have been much too costly to attempt. As the Canadians moved forward, however, the French troops gradually began battle around Morisel and Moreuil on a

front of about two and a half miles. It was 8 o'clock before the Avre bridge-head at Morisel was secured. The infantry then crossed the steep river valley, encircled Moreuil, and pushed forward rapidly to keep in place on the flank of the great spear-head of the Canadian and Australian drive. Being well in advance of the French, troops of the 3rd Canadian Division were able to swerve on occasion and take the German forces opposing the advance of the French Army on their right in flank, thus greatly assisting the operations of the latter.

All along the Avre the French maintained a tremendous gun fire against the enemy positions, and by degrees infantry action developed on a wider front towards the neighbourhood of Montdidier. At the same time General Fayolle began to press the Germans along the southern side of the Amiens-Noyon Salient. These operations enabled General Debeney's army to thrust forward to a depth of some $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles behind Montdidier with very small losses. About 2000 prisoners and 70 guns were taken.

The only temporary check to the combined operations occurred on the uplands north of the Somme. Here the enemy was strongly positioned and entrenched, and his gunners answered the great attacking barrage with an impeding curtain fire. In spite of repeated and gallant attempts to capture the positions by British battalions, the advance was held up at this point, and it was not until the following evening that the obstacle was overcome and Chipilly captured.

V.

Throughout all the great salient before Amiens the night of August 8th and the early hours of the following morning were filled with movement and strenuous effort. Ceaseless activity prevailed behind the lines of both the Allies and their enemy. The former were pressing forward, with the utmost possible speed, preparations for a renewal of the offensive before the German resistance had time to stiffen; the latter was straining every resource of transport to bring in new reinforcements and guns to stem the forward thrust of the British and French forces.

There was little artillery activity. The Allies had not yet been able to bring forward their massed batteries, or the huge

supplies of ammunition necessary to feed them. The guns and dumps lost by the enemy during the day's fighting, and the artillery put out of action by British and French shell fire, had seriously impaired German gun-power. There was a bombardment during the night of the new positions occupied by the Canadian Corps and of the lines of communication, which did some damage and caused casualties; but although prolonged, it was never really intensive nor particularly destructive.

In the early morning of August 9th orders were issued to the Canadian Corps to press on with the attack upon the following morning. The objective of the proposed assault was the Bouchoir-Rouvroy-Meharicourt Road. This involved an advance of some 3½ miles from the positions at that time occupied by the 2nd, 1st and 4th Divisions. A very drastic adjustment of divisions boundaries was also ordered for the renewed attack.

On the left, the 2nd Division had to extend its line 2500 yards to the south, taking over the whole of the front previously occupied by the 1st Division. The latter was ordered to move southward, and to take over a very greatly extended frontage, some of its units having to change positions through a distance of three miles. On the right flank of the Corps the 3rd Division was to launch its attack upon a narrow frontage of some 1000 yards, which was to be steadily increased as the advance proceeded.. This Division had taken the place of the 4th Division in the attack after the latter had completed the occupation of its final objective at 1:00 a.m.

This adjustment of boundaries involved the lateral movement of large bodies of troops, and occupied considerable time. In the necessary side-stepping some confusion inevitably arose. This caused delay, and made it difficult to co-ordinate effectively the movements of all the units of which the force of assault was to be composed. As a result only the 6th Brigade, which had not had to change its ground, was ready to advance when the zero hour arrived.

In order to cover the increased frontage of the 2nd Division, the 5th Brigade was ordered up into the line on the right of the 6th Brigade. Unfortunately the former was not able to get into position in time to advance at zero hour, which had been set for

11:00 a.m. on August 9th. Thus, when the time came, the 6th Brigade was left to launch the attack alone.

So rapid had been the advance of the previous day that the infantry had outstripped, in some measure, its communications. There was difficulty in getting forward the large quantities of supplies necessary for a force of such strength. Moreover the artillery, although it had limbered up immediately after the initial barrage and had pressed forward as quickly as possible in the wake of the infantry, was still, for the most part, too far to the rear for effective support, and was lacking in adequate supplies of shells. The tank formations, which had suffered severely from enemy shell fire in the later stages of the battle, were more or less disorganized, and could give only a limited assistance. For the attack of August 9th, the infantry was compelled, therefore, to rely to a large extent upon its own resources.

On the front of the 2nd Division the ground was more or less open, with a general eastward slope as far as Meharicourt, beyond which was an appreciable ridge. Towards the right of the divisional frontage was a shallow valley running from Caix to Meharicourt. On the left the ground was considerably higher than that over which the division was to advance, particularly in the vicinity of Lihons, which was the objective of the Australians, operating on the Canadian left. The whole country was intersected by old trenches, but no maps of these were available when the attack took place. As a consequence it was not realized that such cover existed.

On the 6th Brigade front the capture of the village of Rosieres had been assigned to the 31st Battalion. This village lay at the crest of a gradual slope which stretched some 1000 yards in front of the positions occupied by the Battalion before the attack. The ground was, for the most part, open, and the village was strongly garrisoned and defended. During the night of August 8th/9th the Germans had worked with feverish energy, consolidating and improving their positions, while lorry loads of automatic rifles had been rushed forward to assist in the defence of the position. The enemy was determined to hold his ground, or, at the worst, to sell it very dearly.

For the attack, however, the Battalion had received a new reinforcement. During the fighting of the previous day the Transport Section had found a little Russian pony, barely twelve hands

high, and of a sociable and friendly disposition. He was adopted by the Alberta Regiment as its mascot, and christened "Heine." For the rest of the campaign "Heinie" remained with the Battalion, and was finally demobilized in Calgary after the return of the unit from overseas.

VI.

With the advent of daylight on August 9th the men of the 31st Battalion commenced their preparations for the battle. No enemy movement was perceptible, but his snipers were very active; and for a time a lively engagement took place between the picked marksmen of the opposing forces. As the light increased the German artillery commenced a bombardment, largely with guns of heavy calibre, of the Canadian positions and rearward areas. This lasted from 5:30 until 10:00 a.m., the enemy guns, during that period, doing their utmost to break up concentrations and hinder communication.

The morning was clear and fair, with excellent visibility. Before the 31st Battalion stretched a gentle slope, green and vivid, bathed in early sunlight and as yet almost unscarred by the ravages of war. The green was to be stained ere long with red, and the slope littered with dead and wounded.

At 11:00 a.m. the 2nd Division opened the attack, with the 6th Brigade moving forward alone against the Rosieres-Vrely Line. On its right the 5th Brigade was not yet ready to advance. On its left was the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division, which was also late in starting. In support, along the valley running northward from Caix to Harbonnieres, the 9th Cavalry Brigade, under Brig.-Gen. Legend, was in position.

The first objective of the 6th Brigade was the light railway to the east of Rosieres. Should the situation permit, it was proposed to push on and endeavour to seize the Chaulnes-Roye railway. Five tanks had been ordered to support the Brigade, and to render all possible assistance against the German machine-gun posts in the village of Rosieres, where stubborn resistance was anticipated.

The front of the 31st Battalion stretched from the Caix-Rosieres Road on the north to the light railway on the south, a distance of about 1300 yards.

Just before the advance commenced a little group of officers and men of the 31st Battalion were gathered together in the lines. They were watching the village and the slope over which they were soon to advance, and discussing the situation.

"How far is it to the village?" asked Lieut. G. A. Cunliffe, who was to command D Company in the attack.

"One thousand yards, Sir," replied a runner who was standing by.

"One thousand deaths," said the officer quietly, as he made his way forward to lead his men.

The preliminary bombardment came down. It was comparatively feeble. As yet only a few guns were sufficiently far forward to take an effective part in the barrage, and ammunition supplies were low. Then the infantry moved forward into the open.

"Advance! Get going!" came the command along the line. Immediately barrage after barrage of bullets from machine guns and automatic rifles came down on the attackers as they extended to commence the advance towards the village. Men began to fall, dead or wounded, ere well clear of their positions.

"Come on, men, keep going!" yelled Lieut. Cunliffe, waving forward the men of D Company. Then he fell, killed instantly by a bullet through his head—one of the first of the deaths he had predicted a few minutes earlier.

The hostile shell fire now became heavy, as the enemy artillery brought its impeding barrage to bear. From the front of the Brigade machine-gun nests at Rosieres and along the Rosieres-Vrely Road swept the ranks of the assaulting troops, while from the unprotected flanks enfilade fire poured across the whole Brigade frontage. Men were falling fast, and the advance was checked. To proceed in the face of such murderous cross-fire meant suicide.

Urgent messages were sent back by runners asking for tanks to be sent forward to cover the attack, but they did not arrive for about an hour, and in the meantime the situation of the infantry was tragic. The order to resume the advance was passed down the line, and the men responded gallantly. By means of short sectional rushes ground was gained, but the cost was heavy. The long, gradual slope that led towards Rosieres afforded an ideal field of fire for the enemy machine-gunners, and they were making the most of it.

In the van of the Brigade attack the 29th and 31st Battalions suffered heavily. From their right machine guns stationed in the valley of the Caix-Vrely Road swept their ranks; from the cover of the railway on their left other machine guns poured jets of bullets across their front; from a big dump of material in Rosieres station, from the cellars of houses overlooking the slope and from the tower of the church yet other guns discharged their streams of death. Overhead the white wreaths of shrapnel and on the ground the red flames of bursting shell added their quotas to the toll of death. Yet in spite of everything, with splendid courage and dogged determination, the men made ground.

Presently the tanks came forward; but, with no mist to veil their movements, they made fair targets for the German guns and anti-tank rifles. The 28th Battalion endeavoured to screen them by throwing smoke grenades to windward, but the protection thus afforded was inadequate, and three of the five tanks detailed to co-operate with the Brigade were out of action before the village was reached.

Meanwhile, with both flanks exposed, the 6th Brigade was bearing the brunt of the enemy artillery and machine-gun fire. At every attempt made by the individual sections to get up and double forward, the enemy machine guns were switched on to the moving target, and more men fell. The slope was dotted with khaki-clad figures, some ominously still, some painfully crawling back towards the rear.

On the high ground to the right B Company, with its flank in the air, came under a deadly machine-gun fire from the direction of Vrely. Suddenly the men became aware of a body of the enemy, some 100 strong, advancing to envelop the right flank of the Company. Two platoons were immediately sent out to check this advance, and under the fire of their Lewis guns the attack was beaten down.

Capt. Jewitt, commanding C Company, made valiant efforts to get his men forward in the face of a hail of bullets. While so engaged he was badly wounded in the neck. He refused to go back, but permitted his men to dress the wound and then crawled to the shelter of a tree. From this inadequate protection he continued to watch the advance and, seeing it checked, he got to his feet and called to his men. Such was the din of the firing, however, that he

failed to make himself heard. Then, in spite of his wound, which was bleeding profusely, he took out his message book and wrote an order for reinforcements, which he sent back by his company runner.

Lieut. W. C. West, commanding No. 10 Platoon, led his men forward in a sudden dash from one shell hole to another. The party was caught by machine-gun fire and practically wiped out, its leader falling badly wounded. Do what they would, the men of C Company, in the centre of the Battalion line, found it practically impossible to get ahead against the blizzard of bullets which swept the ground.

At about this time, however, a single section of C Company, led by Lieut. W. Harris, managed to push forward. Showing great dash and courage, and aided, perhaps, by a measure of fortune, this little party was successful in getting into a position from which the church tower could be brought under its fire. With excellent marksmanship it proceeded to put the three machine guns stationed in the tower out of action. Simultaneously with the advance of D Company a tank came up, supporting the centre and right companies, and the whole line began to move forward once more.

On the extreme right the enemy was still endeavouring to envelop the uncovered flank of the Battalion, and troops could be seen massing for an attack. Just then the 9th Cavalry Brigade detached a squadron which charged down upon the gathering Germans and swept them away, taking a number of prisoners.

The forward movement of the 31st Battalion now became accelerated. The arrival of the tank had practically broken down machine-gun resistance on the right. Overhead British aeroplanes, which had established complete mastery over those of the enemy, bombed and machine-gunned the German positions.

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon the Alberta Regiment was reinforced by a company of the 28th Battalion, which was in support, and half an hour later the attacking troops were well up to the village. One by one the enemy machine-gun posts were subdued by the snipers, or by the bombs dropped from aeroplanes; and gradually the Battalion commenced to close in on its objective. At this point in the action Lieut. Woods, of D Company, was seriously wounded and collapsed immediately.

Section after section now advanced upon the village at the double, with bayonets fixed. The attack, however, was not concerted; and the enemy, having massed, waited until the van of the assault was over the main road and then swept down in a counter-attack. But they had not reckoned on the promptness of the Battalion Lewis-gunners. These were prepared, and went into action immediately. Long swathes were cut in the massed ranks of the Germans, who wavered and broke, seeking cover from the murderous hail of lead.

By this time the whole of the Battalion was up to the village. From house to house went the men, bombing, sniping and bayonetting. Rushes on the part of the enemy were stopped by the fire of the Lewis guns or met with the bayonet. From the houses bombs were hurled at the men as they advanced along the street, and for a time fierce close-quarter fighting prevailed. By 2:30 p.m., however, the troops of the 31st Battalion had cleared the major portion of the village and the work of "mopping-up" had commenced.

A tank, which had done some very effective work against hostile machine-gun nests over to the right, was put out of action by a field gun as it reached the village. The same gun had also destroyed a whippet tank, which had been sent forward by the 9th Cavalry Brigade, a short time before. The only other tank which had been successful in getting forward was wrecked by an anti-tank weapon as it was trying to reach a machine-gun nest on the front of C Company. It ended its career in a ditch; but its crew still carried on. Taking cover in the valley between the 31st Battalion and elements of the 5th Brigade, which were by this time advancing on the right, the officer in charge of the tank and his men opened fire on the enemy post and then charged it. This gallant officer of the Tank Corps, whose name is not recorded, was killed in leading his men forward.

While the 31st Battalion was engaged in driving the enemy from Rosieres, a squadron of enemy aeroplanes, which had managed to evade the vigilance of the British pilots, came over, flying at an altitude of about 100 ft. They endeavoured to check the advance by bombing and machine-gunning the attacking troops, and were successful in causing casualties; but the men, with the memories of that ghastly slope behind them, were in no mood to be

stopped by trifles, and went on with the work of clearing the village. By 4:30 p.m. the job was completed, and the 31st Battalion had taken up a position some 600 yards east of the light railway.

VII.

Meanwhile the 29th Battalion, fighting valiantly, had advanced on the left of the Alberta unit. Opposed by almost point-blank enfilade fire from the Chaulnes-Amiens railway, it had suffered heavily, but had pushed forward in spite of its losses. On the Battalion right the 5th Brigade had been late in coming into action, and only commenced to get up into position as the men of Alberta were clearing the village. Fighting desperately against machine-gun post after machine-gun post, the troops of this Brigade had found progress as slow and difficult as had those of their sister Brigade to the north.

Towards the high ground westward of Lihons, on the left of the 6th Brigade, the Australians had been striving hard to get forward to relieve the pressure on the flank of the 29th Battalion. In this they were unsuccessful at first, thus retarding the 29th in its advance. By about 2:30 p.m., however, fighting with great determination, they had advanced sufficiently to enable the Canadian unit to resume its attack. By 4:00 p.m. the Sugar Factory north of Rosieres was in the hands of the 29th Battalion. At this time the 5th Brigade was also well forward, but had been brought to a temporary standstill in front of Vrely.

The 31st Battalion had not been long in position in front of Rosieres when lorry loads of enemy reinforcements were observed approaching from the east. Troops, estimated at over 1000, were seen to alight, deploy and begin to advance against the Battalion lines. This concentration of the enemy looked serious, as the Battalion was much disorganized and in no condition to resist a determined counter-attack delivered in force. Not only had it lost heavily in the action, but many of its men had gone astray. Some appear to have followed the 22nd Battalion when it moved off to Meharicourt on the right, and others to have become mixed up with the 28th Battalion when it bridged the gap between the 31st Battalion and the 29th on the left. It is probable that little more than one half of the Battalion strength was present at this time to hold the captured line.

Lieut. W. M. Harris, in command of D Company, which was in advance of the main position, recognized the danger of permitting the enemy to concentrate in force. He immediately ordered his Lewis guns into action while his men prepared to receive the enemy at the point of the bayonet. The fire of the Lewis guns was deadly. It halted the Germans and drove them to cover, and the counter-attack died down.

At about this time Vrely was taken by the 5th Brigade, and its vanguard moved forward towards Meharicourt.

By this time all units of the Canadian Corps had either captured or were well up to their objectives, but the situation was still grave. The new line was not yet stabilized and little consolidation had been done.

As dusk fell the 28th Battalion moved through the 31st and commenced consolidating a new line about 1000 yards east of Rosieres. A little later the 31st Battalion was ordered forward to take over these positions, to permit the 28th to withdraw for the purpose of reorganization. At about 10:00 p.m. the Alberta unit, collecting what men were available, relieved the 28th Battalion and settled down for the night, after establishing contact with the 22nd Battalion on the right and the 27th on the left.

Some four hours earlier the 5th Brigade had reached Meharicourt and had advanced some 500 yards beyond the village. Further south the 1st Division had taken Beaufort and Warvillers, and was beyond Rovroy, while on the right flank of the Canadian of the Canadian line the 3rd Division had gone through Bouchoir line the 3rd Division had gone through Bouchoir and established its line well beyond the village. The average depth of the advance over the entire Canadian front, which at this point had been extended in width to over six miles as the crow flies, was from four to six miles as a result of the day's fighting.

This advance, although less spectacular than that of the previous day, was quite as great an achievement. It had been a case of infantry, without adequate support from artillery or tanks, against infantry strengthened by many machine-gun posts and supported by at least a moderately strong force of artillery. It had involved fighting for every yard gained, and ground won at heavy cost. There had been no mist to assist the attack; and, in going forward under the adverse circumstances, the men of the Canadian

Corps had shown once again that determination, courage and efficiency which had made them the dread of the enemy and had won for them the confidence of General Foch.

To the north the Australians, fighting with a courage and determination every bit as great as their Canadian comrades, had worked up the Lihons Ridge. Men and tanks had advanced over open ground under the direct fire of the German batteries, and by night-fall had reached the crest of the isolated hill swelling some hundreds of feet above the tableland west of Lihons.

During the night the enemy brought up strong reinforcements from the neighbourhood of Cambrai in order to stop the Allied advance. In spite of this, however, it was decided to press the attack to the utmost limit in the hope that, after the defeats of the past two days, the morale of the enemy might be broken and a major success achieved. The advance had reached, by this time, the old battle area of 1916, with its mazes of old trenches and wire, and for the moment open warfare could not continue.

VIII.

On the following day, August 10th, the advance was resumed. For the attack the 4th Division was called upon to move up from corps reserve to the left flank of the Canadian line, and to launch its assault upon the comparatively wide front of about four miles, from the Chaulnes-Amiens railway to Rouvroy. On the right the 3rd Division resumed its attack with the 8th Brigade at 4:20 a.m., and, after some severe fighting, captured Le Quesney. Then, at 10:30 a.m., the 32nd British Division, which had been lent to the Canadian Corps for the operation, passed through the 3rd Division and carried forward the attack on the right, its front extending south from Rouvroy to beyond the Roye-Amiens Road. North of the Canadian Corps boundary the Australians were to continue their thrust towards Lihons, while on the south a general advance of the First French Army was planned.

Zero hour was set for 8:00 a.m. At that hour the Australians, who were still in position on the left of the 2nd Canadian Division, moved forward. The 4th Canadian Division, however, which should have attacked on the Australian right, had not had time to complete its movement, and was not in place. When the Australians advanced, therefore, the 2nd Canadian Division decided

to conform to their movement, and, by continuing to attack, cover the Australian right flank.

Thus once again the 6th Brigade, from its positions in the van of the 2nd Division, went into action, with the 27th Battalion on the left and the 31st on the right, the latter pivoting on the 22nd Battalion of the 5th Brigade.

It was 10:00 a.m. when the 27th Battalion commenced its forward movement. It was immediately met by a devastating machine-gun fire, but it was not to be stayed. The men of Winnipeg went in with bomb and bayonet against the machine guns, capturing many and killing, or making prisoners of, their crews. At 10:45 a.m. the troops of the 4th Division, advancing in extended battle order under cover of a line of tanks, went through the 6th Brigade, while the latter returned to consolidate its positions east of Rosieres.

At noon the 31st Battalion was visited by Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell and Major A. E. Duncanson, and was ordered to withdraw to brigade support on the west of Rosieres. At 3:00 p.m., while awaiting relief, two squadrons of enemy aircraft came over the Battalion lines, bombing and machine-gunning. They were met by British machines, and three of the enemy were shot down. An hour later two more squadrons attacked the lines of the Brigade, and again two of their machines were brought down by the alert and intrepid British pilots.

At 5:30 p.m., the 31st Battalion moved back to the brick fields just to the west of Rosieres. Almost immediately the enemy commenced to shell the area, and continued to do so with praiseworthy persistence most of the time the 6th Brigade was in support. During the night, however, there was an interlude of quietness, and the men had a chance to get some much needed rest.

Meanwhile the 4th Division had pushed forward the Canadian line, and had captured Chilly and Fouquescourt, advancing, on the average, a further $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles into German territory. Further south the 32nd British Division had also made progress, particularly on its right flank, where the advance reached a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The progress of the Canadian Corps was, however, reaching its limit. German reinforcements were being rushed into the area as fast as their efficient transport system could bring them up. New artillery, to replace the lost batteries, was also being

hurried forward, and strong concentrations of guns had been already assembled in front of Chaulnes, on the north, and Roye, on the south. Against the greatly augmented enemy forces further progress would soon be impossible without tremendous artillery preparation.

For another week fighting continued along the front, principally towards the right flank, where the 32nd British Division, co-operating with elements of the 1st Canadian Division, made further progress. By August 18th the line on the south of the Corps' frontage had been advanced a further two miles. La Chavette, Le Quesnoy, Damery and Goyencourt had been occupied, and the Allied line had been pushed to within a mile of the outskirts of Roye. The Roye-Chaulnes railway was still in enemy hands, although it was now under the guns of the new Canadian positions. To the north, after desperate fighting Lihons had been taken by the Australians.

In all the Canadian Corps had advanced, between August 8th and August 18th, to a mean depth of over 13 miles, and had turned the German positions along the Avre River, thereby opening the way for the further operations of the French armies to the south.

The men of the Dominion had scored, with the co-operation of the hard-fighting Australians and the gallant 32nd British Division, the first great success of the final Allied offensive, and had won the first victory of the glorious "last hundred days."

IX.

The first day in support, August 11th, was spent by the 31st Battalion in checking records and in general reorganization.

It was found that the total casualties in the Battalion during the action had amounted to 253, almost all of which had occurred on the second day. Under the circumstances this number must be regarded as moderate, and as reflecting credit upon the experience of the troops and the quality of their leadership. Of the officers' cadre Lieuts. G. A. Cunliffe, E. A. Finn and A. McCormick, M.M., had been killed, while Major C. B. Hornby, M.C., Capt. W. Jewitt, M.C., and Lieuts. J. C. Hutchinson, M.C., A. R. Leek, M.M., L. H. Irwin, W. H. Williams, W. C. West, G. Lawson, M.C., W. H. French, H. Shillam, F. S. Long and H. McM. Woods had

been wounded. Casualties in the ranks included 26 killed, 204 wounded and 8 missing.

A considerable amount of war material had fallen into the hands of the Battalion during the advance. This included a number of machine guns, an aeroplane, a searchlight, with its gasoline power plant and waggon, a large telescope and its limber, a heavy gun limber, a range finder and an anti-tank gun. Numerous German notes of varying denomination were also found in a German paymaster's hut. These were scattered prodigally for the winds to play with. A little while later, when the 31st Battalion found itself in Germany, the men might have appreciated a few of these wasted notes.

The 2nd Division, as a whole, had advanced fully 21,000 yards in three days, and had taken the villages of Marcelcavé, Wiencourt, Guillaucourt, Rosieres, Vrely and Meharicourt. Four German divisions, the 41st, 109th, 117th and 225th, had been met and defeated during the operations, the first three suffering severely. The division had captured 57 officers and 1589 other ranks, and had accounted for over 1000 Germans killed in action. The total casualties inflicted upon the enemy on the divisional front can not have been much less than 8,000.

On their side the 2nd Division had lost 117 officers and 2,360 other ranks. Of these 29 officers and 345 other ranks had been killed, 88 officers and 1,990 other ranks wounded and 25 other ranks were missing.

During the whole operation, up to the end of August 18th, the Canadian Corps took over 9,000 prisoners, including 168 officers, hundreds of machine guns, a large number of field guns, howitzers and trench mortars, immense quantities of ammunition and much war material.

It is interesting to note that in this action the ratio of killed to wounded in the Canadian casualty lists was about 1 to 6, as compared with an average ratio of around 1 to 4 in trench warfare.

X.

On the night of August 11th the 31st Battalion moved to the valley south of Caix. During the early hours of the following morning the area was repeatedly raided by hostile aircraft, which bombed and machine-gunned the village and its environs, while

a high velocity German gun also caused annoyance. Very little material damage was caused, however, by these activities.

The next day was spent in cleaning equipment and carrying on with the work of re-organization. In the afternoon Lieut. R. W. Buchanan and five other ranks reported to the unit.

On August 14th a welcome draft of 70 other ranks arrived to reinforce the depleted strength of the Battalion, and on the following day four officers — Lieuts. W. M. Gilbert, M.M., N. Thompson, W. J. Carty and G. E. Burrell — reported for duty, bringing with them a further 100 men. Again on August 16th yet another draft of 100 other ranks was brought up by Lieut. J. E. Knott, upon his return from leave in England.

During all this time Caix and its vicinity had been repeatedly raided by German aircraft, which bombed and machine-gunned the Canadian positions. Long range artillery had also shelled the area persistently, but without great effect.

August 16th was a day of changing circumstances and conflicting orders. Heavy enemy counter-attacks had developed during the preceding day or so against the 4th Division, which had been hard put to it to retain the positions it had won; and several times the general alarm, with orders to stand-to, had been given to all units in the Canadian area. Now, on August 16th, it was proposed to relieve the pressure by a further Allied attack. In the early hours of the day the 31st Battalion was ordered to withdraw to the second line of defence east of Marcelcave. At 3:00 p.m. this order was countermanded, and the Battalion was instructed to be in readiness to move at a moment's notice to the forward area to support a combined attack of the French and the 1st Canadian Division against Roye, and the Australians against Chaulnes. This order was also cancelled, and the order given in the early morning was re-issued. Meanwhile, on the right flank of the Canadian line, the 1st Division had been in action and had made some progress.

At 2:20 a.m. on August 17th the 31st Battalion took position in the woods south-east of Marcelcave. The men rested until about 10 o'clock, and then set to work to dig themselves in. On the following day the Commanding Officer, Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., called the company commanders together and explained

details of a further attack which had been planned. During the conference Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell visited the Battalion and discussed arrangements relative to the proposed move and subsequent operations.

At noon on August 19th orders were issued to be prepared to move out for an unknown destination at 4:00 p.m., and at that hour the companies marched from Marcelcave en route for Boves Wood, which was reached shortly after 5 o'clock on the following morning. The road lay through the battlefield over which the Canadians had fought ten days earlier, and from the still unburied dead arose the fetid odours of corruption.

After resting for some eight hours at Boves, the Battalion marched to Longeau where, after a wait of some five hours, it entrained at 11:00 p.m. for Frevent. The latter point was reached at 6 o'clock on August 21st, and shortly afterwards orders were received for the unit to proceed to billets at Magnicourt, in the Lens area. Busses conveyed the men to their destination, which was reached at 10:30 a.m.

At 2 o'clock in the morning of August 22nd orders were received from Brigade Headquarters to the effect that the 31st Battalion was to relieve the 5th Gordons and a company of the 8th Seaforths at Neuville Vitasse. In accordance with these orders the Battalion proceeded by bus to Bac-du-Nord, and then marched via Wailly to Neuville Vitasse, where it took over the right front line. By 3:00 a.m. on August 23rd the relief was completed in spite of active hostile artillery and aircraft.

XI.

In the meantime the Allies had retained the initiative, and had continued to strike hard at the armies of the Central Empires. While the British forces were thrusting eastward into the great salient which the Germans had driven into the Allied line some five months earlier, the French were assailing it from the south.

Having captured Montdidier on August 10th, the French struck again eight days later. Attacking this time further to the east, in the angle between the Oise and the Aisne rivers, the forces of General Mangin captured Nouvron Vingre and pushed

northward to within a mile of Carlepont. On the following day the advance was continued, the village of Morsain being captured.

On August 20th the attack was renewed on a front of 16 miles, from the neighbourhood of Bailly as far as the Aisne, and further progress was made. Lassigny, between Montdidier and Noyon, was entered by the French on August 21st.

Further north the British had continued to press hard upon the enemy. Fighting along the valley of the River Lys, British forces entered Merville on August 19th, and on the following day pushed on and captured l'Epinette.

On August 21st the British Third Army, continuing on the north of the Somme the operations inaugurated by the Canadian Corps south of that river, opened an offensive on a ten-mile front between the Somme and the Ancre. On the first day the British troops advanced three miles, and captured Beaucourt, Bucquoy, Ablainzeville, Moyenneville, Achiet-le-Petit and Courcelles. On the following day Albert was occupied, and on August 23rd Australian troops entered Bray.

Hindenburg, following costly German failures to break the Allied line, had hoped for an offensive on the part of his foes. He was now realizing that hope in full measure; but he had failed to score the great defensive victory which he had counted on.

Everywhere the Allied forces were on the aggressive, and everywhere they were making ground. Progress was generally slow, and sometimes costly, but it was made. Slowly but surely the British and French, backed by the slowly-increasing support of the armies of the United States, were gaining the ascendancy. The tide of war, for the Germans, was definitely on the ebb.

XII.

As a fitting conclusion to this chapter, the following abstract from the report of the Commander of the Canadian Corps on the Battle of Amiens is quoted:

"Between August 8th and 22nd the Canadian Corps fought against 15 German divisions; of these 10 were directly and thoroughly defeated, prisoners being captured from almost every one of their battalions; the five other divisions, fighting astride our flanks, were only partially engaged by



us. In the same period the Canadian Corps captured 9,131 prisoners, 190 guns of all calibres, and more than 1,000 machine guns and trench mortars. The greatest depth penetrated approximated to 14 miles, and an area of over 67 square miles containing 27 towns and villages had been liberated. The casualties suffered by the Canadian Corps in 14 days of heavy fighting amounted to 579 officers and 10,782 other ranks. Considering the number of German divisions engaged and the results achieved, the casualties were very light."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Battle of Arras

I.

The 31st Battalion had been some seven hours in the line at Neuville Vitasse before anything noteworthy transpired. Then Capt. D. C. Robertson, in command of A Company on the right of the Battalion frontage, observed a party of scouts of the 1/7 Cameron Highlanders leave their trenches in front of Mercatel and advance cautiously towards the German positions. Thinking that the enemy might possibly be vacating his forward zone, Capt. Robertson immediately sent out a party of ten men under Sergt. Maynard. Shortly afterwards he dispatched a further detachment of twenty other ranks with a Lewis gun, under command of Lieut. J. C. M. Carson, to exploit any advantage which might be gained. At the same time he notified the officers in command of B and C Companies of his action, and asked them to send out patrols also. This request was immediately complied with.

It was now a little after 10 o'clock in the morning. The patrols of A Company, after having been subjected to heavy machine-gun fire, succeeded in reaching the Sunken Road. At this point the patrol was checked by the machine guns in the "Maze."

B Company's patrol, under Lieut. H. G. Rogers, after proceeding forward for some 300 yards, came under the fire of machine guns stationed both in the "Maze" and in the village of Neuville Vitasse. This patrol was checked also, and the men took cover in shell holes. Meanwhile C Company, on the Battalion left, had put out a patrol under the command of Lieut. W. T. Bannan. This patrol had managed to reach the easterly edge of the Orchard, where it was stopped, in its turn, by machine-gun fire.

During the whole of the day the patrols remained out, studying the situation. At nightfall the patrols of A Company, on the right, were successful in seizing an enemy trench in front of the

"Maze." This success could not be further exploited at the moment, as the "Maze" itself was held in strength by the enemy. By 11:00 p.m., however, a party led by Lieut. W. M. Gilbert had succeeded in getting well forward, and had partially surrounded this post. At a signal from the officer, the enemy position was rushed, and three machine-gunners were bayoneted before the garrison became aware of the fact that they had been surrounded. A fierce fight followed, the enemy resisting stubbornly for a time. At length, however, the survivors were overpowered and surrendered, an officer and 23 other ranks being taken by Lieut. Gilbert and his party.

By this time patrols of B Company were operating in the neighbourhood of the Sugar Factory, which was situated on the Croisilles Road just to the south of Neuville Vitasse. Other patrols, sent out by C Company, having bombed out of existence two troublesome machine-gun posts, joined up with the men of B Company in an enemy trench before the factory, and in a short time the ruins of the building were in the hands of the 31st Battalion.

Patrols of the Battalion were now out in force. Detachments were pushed northwards towards the village, bombing down trenches and clearing them of the enemy. It soon became evident that the Germans were evacuating their forward positions, which were being held only by a strong rear guard. In a short time the trenches covering the village of Neuville Vitasse had been occupied by the men of the Alberta Regiment.

Thus, with an affair of patrols and outposts and without a covering artillery barrage, was the first phase of the Battle of Arras ushered in. The occupation of the Sugar Factory by the 31st Battalion opened the road for the advance of the 27th and 28th Battalions upon Wancourt.

Throughout the night, and during the early hours of the morning of August 24th, the enemy shelled the Canadian positions vigorously. To this the British and Canadian artillery replied with a bombardment of great intensity.

Up to this point the operations had cost the 31st Battalion only 10 casualties, all wounded. To more than offset these small losses a draft of 62 other ranks, under Lieut. H. P. Morgan, reported for duty with the unit.

At 6:00 a.m. on August 24th information was received at Battalion Headquarters to the effect that the 52nd British Division, on the right of the Alberta unit, was going to advance against the enemy positions. The 2nd Canadian Division was ordered to conform to the movement, but to avoid attempting to overcome serious opposition. The 31st Battalion immediately pushed out scouts and patrols with a view to "feeling out" the enemy and ascertaining his strength and position.

A little later the Battalion commenced to fight its way forward. B Company, in the centre, experienced difficulty in getting across the open to the Sunken Road. Enemy shell and machine-gun fire were heavy, and checked the advance, causing casualties. By 10 o'clock a line had been taken up running from the Sugar Factory south-east to the head of a sap in an old German trench, where the company connected up with the right of A Company.

On the left flank of the Battalion C Company was unable, for a time, to cross the Neuville Vitasse-St. Martin Road, but by 9:00 a.m. it had worked its way through the western outskirts of the village. Here it was held up by enemy bombers and machine-gun posts, and a hard fight ensued which lasted for nearly two hours. At length, however, the resistance was overcome, and the men of C Company made good the Sunken Road.

Throughout the morning the men of the 31st Battalion had found great difficulty in getting forward. The enemy positions bristled with well-placed machine guns, and their garrisons fought with the utmost obstinacy and resolution.

During the afternoon patrols were sent forward on reconnaissance duty, and did excellent work. They found the enemy exceedingly alert, and ready for action with bombs and machine guns at the smallest sign of movement. In spite of this the patrols "carried on," giving the enemy no rest, and obtaining much valuable information concerning the location of machine-gun posts and other defensive works. Lieut. R. W. Buchanan, while leading a party on one of these risky enterprises, was shot through the stomach and collapsed. His men, with considerable difficulty, got him back to the Battalion lines under the eyes of a watchful enemy; but he was dead when they brought him in—yet another gallant officer to make the supreme sacrifice. His death was a serious loss and a source of genuine grief to the

men of his company. Lieut. Buchanan had proved himself to be a brave soldier, always careful for the welfare of his men, who had the greatest confidence in his leadership.

The day of August 25th was spent in consolidating the line, while small outposts maintained contact with the enemy. The orders were to hold on and not to attempt any further advance, as the enemy resistance was stiffening and his artillery was putting down barrage after barrage on the front and intermediate lines. In the afternoon the bombardment died down, but became very violent again during the evening when the "heavies" came into action and plastered the intermediate lines and rearward areas with gas and high-explosive shells.

At 11:00 p.m. A Company was relieved by the 1/4 Royal Scots of the 155th British Brigade. Coincident with the relief, the weather changed and it commenced to rain. During the day two other ranks of the 31st Battalion had been killed and five wounded, while Lieuts. N. Thompson and H. G. Rogers had been sent back suffering from wounds.

In the early hours of the following morning news was received that the 2nd Canadian Division would take part in a general engagement in conjunction with the British Third Army to the south. The main action of the Battle of Arras was about to commence.

II.

While the Canadians had been worrying the enemy south-east of Arras, the British and French had maintained heavy pressure elsewhere. General Mangin had continued to advance on the line from Crecy-au-Mont to Chavigny. On August 24th the British had resumed their series of attacks north of the Somme, and on the following day were masters of the whole of the road from Albert to a point just to the south of Bapaume. Martinpuich, Le Sars, Warlencourt, Manetz and Manetz Wood had been occupied, a large number of prisoners had been taken, and great booty in guns, machine-guns and war material had been captured.

This considerable advance of the British Third Army into the great Amiens Salient had placed the German forces holding it in the neighbourhood of Bapaume in jeopardy should the flank of their positions, resting in front of Arras, be turned. This

flank was but thinly held by the enemy, and had not yet been assailed.

The enemy positions in the vicinity of Arras were regarded by the German General Staff as so strong that no attack in this region could hope to meet with more than a very limited degree of success. The forward defences consisted of old British trenches, well wired and lavishly provided with machine guns. Behind this deep zone of defence ran the tunnelled Siegfried line of the Hindenburg system, in the rear of which was the powerful Wotan switch line, running from Queant to Drocourt. This line was deeply dug, heavily wired, and covered by hundreds of machine-gun emplacements so arranged as to give interlocking zones of fire. Finally there was the line of the Canal du Nord, with its marshes guarding its northern flank.

In spite, however, of the strength and depth of these positions, the German General Staff decided to make assurance doubly sure. In the last week of August an additional division was put into the line in front of Arras to reinforce its garrison.

It was against these positions, with their reinforced defenders, that the British and Canadian Battalions launched their attack on August 26th.

The task of the Canadian Corps, which at this time had a strength of about 100,000, including all arms of the service, was to break through the enemy lines in front of Arras and drive eastward astride the Arras-Cambrai Road. The approach lay between the Scarpe and Sensee rivers. The 51st Highland Division had been lent to Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. W. Currie to assist on the left flank of the Canadian Corps, while the XVII Corps of Third Army covered the right flank. Between these two flanks the line ran from south of Neuville Vitasse northward by Telegraph Hill and Tilloy-les-Mofflaines over the Cambria Road, from which point it turned north-eastward through Feuchy and towards Fampoux on the River Scarpe. Overlooking this line, in enemy territory, was the height of Monchy-le-Preux, which dominated the entire Arras area. Between Monchy and the Corps' line were the twin elevations of Chapel Hill and Orange Hill, outposts of the main height at Monchy.

The attack of August 26th was entrusted to the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions. The former had the right section of the

Corps' frontage, running from Neuville Vitasse to the Arras-Cambrai Road; the latter occupied the left position, its line running north-eastward from the Arras-Cambrai Road to the winding waters of the River Scarpe. North of the Scarpe the line of attack was continued by the 51st Highland Division. To the south of the 2nd Canadian Division the 52nd Highland Division protected the right flank of the assaulting troops.

The area from which the attack was to be launched was well known to the men of the Dominion. In the summer of 1917, and again in the spring of the following year, they had held the line in this area, and had raided, on many occasions, into the German positions. The rearward areas in the vicinity were well provided in the way of dumps, light railways and roads, and was familiar ground to the Canadian troops.

In front of the left flank of the 2nd Division the Arras-Cambrai Road ran over the crest of Chapel Hill; beyond the right flank, and overlooking the line of advance, was a ridge running east and west between Neuville Vitasse and the Cojeul River. Neither of these elevations rose to a greater height than a hundred feet or so above the lower ground in their neighbourhood. Between Wan-court and Neuville-Vitasse, however, the German positions on the heights menaced the line of advance from both sides.

The assault of the 2nd Division was to be carried out with the 4th Brigade on the left and the 6th Brigade on the right, the latter to form a defensive flank for the advance of the former, facing approximately south-east. For the operations of the first day two objective lines, known as the "Green Dotted Line" and the "Red Line" respectively, were laid down. When the 4th Brigade had gained its objective, and the British forces to the south had cleared the Wan-court Ridge, the 6th Brigade was to mop up the valley between and clear it of the enemy.

On the 3rd Division frontage Orange Hill and the height of Monchy were major objectives. As the gentle slopes of these hills provided admirable fields of fire for machine guns, the task confronting this division promised to be no easy one.

The attack of the 6th Brigade, under the command of Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell, was allotted to the 27th and 28th Battalions, with the 29th in support and the 31st in reserve. The last named unit was ordered to stand fast and to await a favourable opportunity

before going forward into action. Zero hour was fixed for 3:00 a.m.

III.

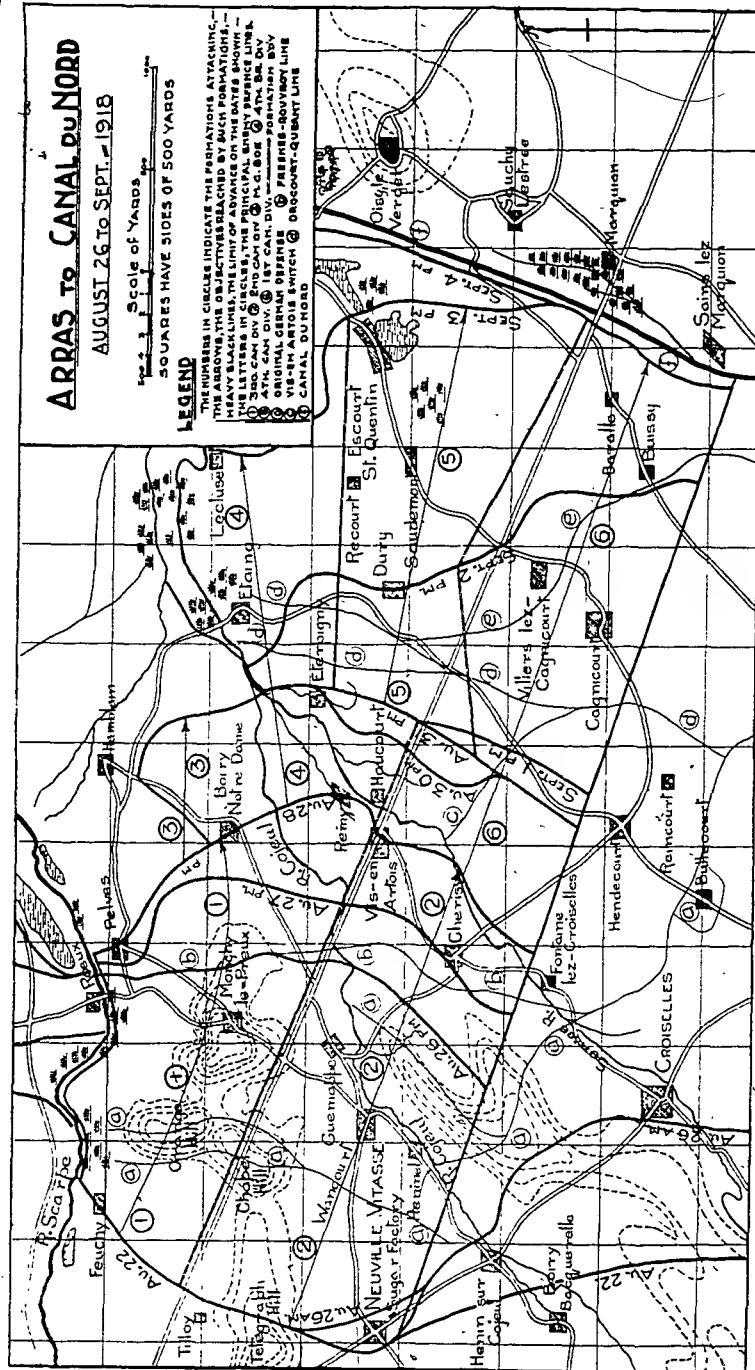
A cold rain was falling when, at 2:40 a.m. on August 26th, the companies of the 31st Battalion withdrew from the Sunken Road in order to minimize the risk of casualties from retaliatory gun fire, leaving the line held by two outposts only. Promptly at 3 o'clock the darkness was stabbed by the flickering flashes of the covering barrage. Seventeen brigades of 18-pounders, nine brigades of heavy artillery and some thirty long-range guns crashed simultaneously into action in support of the Canadian advance, all firing as fast as their crews could work them. A few minutes later the infantry moved forward to the attack.

The 4th Brigade was through the first German line by 3:30 a.m. and, dashing into the open, carried Chapel Hill by a magnificent charge. On the front of the 6th Brigade progress was slower. The enemy put up a most stubborn resistance, and dogged hand-to-hand fighting developed at many points. The men of the West refused to be stopped, however; and, although checked for a time, fought their way forward resolutely.

Meanwhile the 31st Battalion, as soon as the preliminary shelling had died down, had re-occupied its position in the neighbourhood of the Sunken Road. Machine guns were immediately mounted, and fire opened at selected targets in the enemy positions. At 6 o'clock orders were issued for the 6th Brigade to connect up with the 155th British Brigade on the right. The 31st Battalion at once went forward and effected the junction with little difficulty.

At 7:00 a.m. the Alberta unit was again withdrawn and concentrated in the original front-line positions of the 27th and 28th Battalions. By this time the advance had been pushed well forward along most parts of the line. Two companies of the 27th Battalion had joined up with the 4th Brigade, while the remaining companies, in conjunction with the 29th Battalion, had formed a defensive flank through Edinburgh and Glasgow trenches.

As soon as the 4th Brigade had secured its objectives, the 27th and 28th Battalions proceeded to "mop-up" the valley running eastward from Neuville Vitasse. Then they advanced to Wan-court on the Red Dotted Line objective. This village was carried



with the bayonet, and a further brilliant attack captured Guemappe. This involved a somewhat complicated manoeuvre, and necessitated a change of direction to the south, roughly at right angles to the general line of advance. The evolution had to be performed, moreover, in the face of barrage after barrage of machine-gun fire from the high ground of the ridge. It was successfully carried out, and the advance resumed.

Later in the afternoon the artillery put down a supporting barrage, and the 27th and 28th Battalions were instructed to extend their objectives to include Cherisy, a village in the valley south-east of the Tower Ridge. This was the first serious artillery support afforded to the 6th Brigade during the whole of its advance, the major part of the gun-fire available for the division having been allocated to the 4th Brigade.

With their men wearied by the stubborn fighting of the day, and with ranks depleted by casualties, these two splendid battalions went on to the new objectives. In the face of deadly machine-gun fire and determined resistance, the ridge was taken ere nightfall.

Here the two battalions had to change direction again to the south-east. This presented some difficulty, as the eastern side of the ridge was exposed to short-range fire from a trench, known as Egret Trench, located on the reverse slope. The manoeuvre was successfully carried out, however, and the attack resumed.

The advance was not destined to be carried much further that night, however. Egret Trench was found to be strongly manned and plentifully supplied with machine guns. It was not until the following morning that a brilliant surprise attack carried the position.

Meanwhile the 31st Battalion had moved forward, at about 3:00 p.m., to an advanced position. The move had been made under severe hostile shell fire, which continued until after darkness had fallen. It then died down, and the men were able to obtain some rest in preparation for the exertions which lay ahead.

Thus ended the first day of the major operations in front of Arras. It had been most successful for the attacking forces. The Germans had defended their positions resolutely, but had been unable to hold their lines against the determination and courage of the troops of Canada and Scotland. For the most part the defenders were picked troops from well-known regiments, yet in

hand-to-hand fighting they were no match for the specially trained men of the Dominion, and they paid a heavy price for their stubbornness. In many places captured trenches were choked with German dead, and during the first day over 2,000 prisoners were sent back to the Canadian cages. Many machine guns and trench mortars were also taken; but the count in guns was low, as the advance had stopped just short of the main artillery line.

Some 6,000 yards in depth had been gained on a front of 10,000 yards. The dangerous curve towards Arras had been straightened out, and positions had been won from which to launch a further attack. The 3rd Division, on the left of the Canadian line, had reached Pelves, in the German positions of 1917; and the 51st Highland Division was up to Roeux. At the end of the day the line ran through the old German trenches between Monchy and the two little woods of Bois-du-Sart and Bois-du-Vert, over the Arras-Cambri Road and the Cojeul River east of Guemappe, and then south-west along the Wancourt Tower Ridge.

IV.

It had been intended that the 6th Brigade should resume its attack at daybreak on August 27th. This was found to be inadvisable under the circumstances which had arisen. Both the 27th and 28th Battalions were exhausted with the severe fighting of the previous day, and had been considerably reduced in strength by the casualties which they had suffered. It was decided, therefore, to resume the attack with the 4th and 5th Brigades and to rest the 6th Brigade during the hours of daylight.

The right of the divisional attack thus developed upon the 5th Brigade, which passed through the 27th and 28th Battalions and advanced upon the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. To the north of the 5th Brigade the line of attack was continued by the 4th Brigade, while on the left the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division resumed the operations of the previous day. By this time the battle had split up into two more or less distinct sections, with the 2nd Division thrusting south-eastwards in the neighbourhood of Wancourt Tower Ridge and the 3rd Division working down the southern side of the Scarpe Valley.

During the day the Canadians met with the most strenuous resistance, and suffered heavy punishment at the hands of the

enemy. The Germans had pushed forward large numbers of reinforcements, including numerous machine-gun units in motor lorries, and were now contesting vigorously every yard of ground gained by the men of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Hostile field batteries, firing over open sights, showed remarkable tenacity, several remaining in action in the open until their crews had been shot down by the Canadian Lewis-gunners.

Meanwhile the 6th Brigade was resting. It was not until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon that any forward move was made by its units. Then the 31st Battalion was ordered to advance and take up position in Crow and Buzzard trenches. The first company was in the new line at 6:15 p.m., and the move was completed before 8 o'clock. The night passed quietly, with but little shelling on the part of the enemy.

The attack was resumed on August 28th. Its objective was the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, the capture of which was necessary for the success of any subsequent operations against the Drocourt-Queant defences.

Shortly after noon, in driving rain, the 2nd and 3rd Divisions once more threw themselves forward into desperate battle. On the 2nd Divisional frontage the assault was continued by the 4th and 5th Brigades, with the 6th still in reserve. Fighting fiercely through the troops opposed to them, which consisted, for the most part, of fresh battalions which had replaced the shattered ranks of those engaged during the previous day, these two fine brigades made ground by virtue of stark courage and grim determination. Along the valley of the Sensee River some of the most sanguinary fighting of the whole battle occurred. Eventually the village of Cherisy was taken, and strong points were established on the eastern side of the river which were successfully maintained against a series of most determined counter-attacks.

The 5th Brigade was held up at Vis-en-Artois, after having met with a resistance of the utmost resolution. The 3rd Division also ran into determined opposition, but succeeded in gaining ground by repeated charges with bomb and bayonet. The Bois-du-Vert and the Bois-du-Sart, both strongly-fortified patches of woodland, gave considerable trouble, but were ultimately captured. A part of the village of Pelves was also occupied, and at this point the division established contact with the British troops operating to the

north of the river. In addition, somewhat precarious footholds had been won in the villages of Harcourt, Remy and Boirg-Notre-Dame.

By this time the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, after three consecutive days of the most bitter and strenuous fighting, were completely exhausted. Their losses had been extremely heavy, and it was imperative that they should be withdrawn for rest and reorganization. One brigade, for example (the 5th) had lost in killed and wounded some 100 officers and 2,500 men, or well over 50 per cent. of its original strength at the opening of the action.

On August 29th the weary troops were not used for assault, but spent the day in holding and consolidating their newly-won positions. The other two Canadian divisions, last to leave the Amiens front, were now in the area, and ready to take over the line. The hour of relief was at hand.

V.

Meanwhile the 31st Battalion, on the left of the 6th Brigade front, had moved forward at 12:30 p.m. on August 28th and had taken up a position in the trenches on Occident Lane, running north-eastward to the divisional boundary. In front the 5th Brigade, attacking on an extended frontage and with ranks seriously depleted by the casualties of the previous day, was in difficulties. The enemy positions were strong, well wired, powerfully garrisoned by fresh troops, and provided with innumerable machine guns. Artillery support was lacking, and after a time it was found impossible to make further progress.

As time went on the seriousness of the situation at this point in the line became apparent. At 5:30 p.m. the 31st Battalion, with its sister regiments of the 6th Brigade, was ordered to withdraw to the support trenches known as Hut and Quarry. An hour later the Brigade was split up, the 29th Battalion going into support of the 5th Brigade and the 31st to the 4th Brigade, while the 27th and 28th Battalions remained in position on the high ground west of the Sensee River.

Under orders of 4th Brigade Headquarters, the 31st Battalion passed through and advanced for an attack upon Olive Trench, which had been causing a lot of trouble with its machine guns. This order was received at 7:30 p.m. Some fifteen minutes later word came through that the enemy was attacking in mass north of the

Arras-Cambri Road. At about the same time large bodies of hostile troops were observed approaching the left flank of the Division, and it was thought that a counter-attack was being contemplated in this vicinity. It soon became clear, however, that the enemy was only reinforcing. By this time darkness was falling, and in view of the augmented strength of the enemy garrisons, 4th Brigade Headquarters decided not to send the 31st Battalion forward to the attack.

At 9:30 p.m. it was learned that the Alberta Regiment was about to be relieved by the 7th Battalion of the 1st Division. While awaiting the relief heavy shell fire was opened by the enemy upon the Battalion positions. At midnight the relief was commenced, and the companies moved back to the Wancourt area for the night. Here it was joined by 62 other ranks who had come up as reinforcements.

At 3:00 p.m. on August 29th the 31st Battalion moved back independently by companies to the Wailly area, the movement being completed by 7:00 p.m. On the road the troops met a number of French civilians returning to their shelled and ruined homes.

The last two days of the month were spent in resting, cleaning equipment and reorganization. The men managed to get a bath and a change of clothing before marching, at 7:00 p.m. on August 31st, to Archicourt. On this date the Battalion Medicinal Capt. F. M. Petrie, left the unit to return to England, and was superseded by Capt. G. Parker, C.A.M.C.

Thus ended the first attempt at the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line. The Canadian Corps had bitten deeply into enemy territory, had inflicted heavy casualties, taken many prisoners and much war material; but it had failed to break the line.

In so far as the 31st Battalion was concerned, the casualties during the operations had been light. In the week it had lost one officer killed, five wounded, and 62 other ranks killed and wounded. The casualties in the 6th Brigade had been 20 officers and 322 other ranks. These light losses had not been the common experience of the Canadian units taking part in the action, however; the 5th Brigade had lost more than half its effectives, and the 4th more than 1,300 officers and men, while the 22nd Battalion had 500 casualties, not a single officer coming through unwounded.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Droucourt-Queant Line, the Canal du Nord and the Battle of Cambrai

I.

By the time the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions had completed their part of the first phase of the great drive eastward from Arras the line was in good position for an attack on the Drocourt system. The most important portions of the Fresnes-Rouvy line were in Canadian hands. A gain of a further 600 yards only was required for complete mastery of these defences.

The 2nd and 3rd Divisions were replaced, during the night of August 28th, by the 1st Canadian Division on the right and 4th British Division on the left. By the evening of the following day the line had been taken forward to a depth of another 2000 yards. Brutinel's Brigade of mobile machine guns and trench mortars had taken the two important German machine-gun citadels of Bench Farm and Victoria Copse; the 1st Division had successfully attacked in the Vis-en-Artois Switch, and had repelled two large scale counter-attacks; and the 4th British Division had driven forward through wooded and heavily wired country to capture Remy and Eterpigny.

Early on September 1st the 4th Canadian Division, newly arrived from hard fighting in the Somme area, entered the line.

At this time it became obvious that the enemy was thoroughly aware of the preparations which were proceeding for a further attack upon his positions. From both the north and south of the threatened sector of his line he had withdrawn divisions to reinforce his defence. In many parts of the line the attacking forces were faced by a material superiority in numbers, the 1st and 4th Canadian Divisions being opposed by no less than four German divisions. The fighting ahead of the troops of Britain and the Dominion promised to be desperate. In front of them lay four

distinct lines of defence, including the famous Drocourt-Queant system, all linked up with tunnels and communication trenches, all heavily wired and all strongly manned.

On the morning of September 2nd the major operation, which had as its objective the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line and the forcing of the enemy back to the Canal du Nord, was launched. In the attack the 1st Division was on the right of the line and the 4th in the centre, with the 4th British Division on the left.

The assault was made in mist, which assisted the attacking forces by masking, in some measure, their movements. The supporting barrage was the most terrific which had yet been laid down. Not only were the Drocourt trenches pulverised almost out of existence, but the support lines also were obliterated. The German batteries were put out of action, and so devastating was the fire that within an hour of zero the Canadian artillery was able to move forward into new positions.

Tanks, armoured cars and motor machine guns dashed forward into the attack and once again got through the infantry lines of the enemy, carrying disorganization and demoralization with them. The Canadian infantry drove forward doggedly, overcoming with little difficulty the disconnected groups of the enemy which attempted to stay the advance. There was little of the slow, grim progress and costly sacrifice which had characterized the fighting of the previous week. The resistance of the defenders had been largely crushed by the overwhelming power of the artillery barrage.

At relatively low cost in casualties, the whole of the Drocourt-Queant system was captured. Thousands of German prisoners were sent back—long lines of crushed and dejected men from some of the most famous regiments of the enemy.

As soon as the line was captured the armoured cars and mobile machine guns drove forward into the open, cutting up the retreating Germans and adding to their demoralization. Their mission was to seize the Marquion bridge over the Canal du Nord. They managed to get within sight of their objective, but the German defences were too strong to be penetrated.

For the Canadians it had been another day of splendid success. The new line ran approximately 6000 yards beyond the Drocourt defences; and the whole advance, since the commence-

ment of the operations, on August 26th, had exceeded twelve miles. From the south news was received that a British naval division had captured Queant.

At dawn on September 3rd the work of clearing the remnants of the German forces from the western side of the Canal du Nord commenced. By the following day the line was established along the west bank, and the final objective of the second phase of the operations had been successfully achieved. The Canadian advance had, moreover, enabled the XVII British Corps on the right to widen the breach in the enemy lines and to occupy a large stretch of territory to the south.

II.

While these events had been in progress in the forward area, the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions had been resting and reorganizing. The period allowed for recuperation was, however, of short duration. At 1:00 a.m. on September 2nd instructions were received by the 31st Battalion to the effect that it must be ready to move at any time after 5:00 a.m. It was 8:00 o'clock in the afternoon before the orders came through, and a few minutes later the Battalion was on its way to Neuville Vitasse.

At 10:15 a.m. on the following day the march was resumed. A halt was made at a point some mile or so north of Cherisy shortly after noon, and the men lunched in pouring rain. After lunch, while the Battalion was waiting for orders, ammunition and new equipment were issued. At 8 o'clock in the evening the unit again moved forward to the relief of the 7th Battalion.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in taking over the line. The situation in the advanced positions was uncertain, the guides were late in putting in an appearance and the whole area was being heavily shelled by the enemy. It was 4:15 on the morning of September 4th before the 31st Battalion reached its ground near the western bank of the Canal du Nord, just east of Baralla.

Throughout the day the enemy shelled the Battalion lines, while his aircraft dropped a large number of bombs all over the area. That night the 27th Battalion relieved the 102nd Battalion on the left of the 31st, while the 29th replaced the 4th Battalion on the right. The reliefs were made under heavy shell fire, and at their conclusion the 6th Brigade was holding some 5,500 yards

of frontage, with three Battalions in the line and one—the 28th Battalion—in support. The 31st Battalion was disposed with A and D Companies in the advanced positions, C Company in support and B Company in reserve.

During the next two days the enemy artillery was active, shelling both the forward positions and the roads to the rear with gas and high explosives. His air force was also much in evidence, dropping bombs upon the Canadian lines and giving battle to the machines of the Royal Air Force.

At 1 o'clock on the morning of Saturday, September 7th, the German batteries commenced an intensive bombardment of the positions held by the 31st Battalion. Gas shells were employed which drenched the entire area occupied by the unit as well as the villages of Baraille and Buissy in the immediate rear. The bombardment continued with unabated violence until 6:00 p.m. It then died down; but, owing to the dampness of the ground, the gas hung low and caused considerable trouble, the men being compelled to wear their gas masks all the time. By 7 o'clock, however, the fumes had sufficiently dispersed to permit of the removal of the respirators. Unfortunately a change of the wind occurred shortly afterwards, blowing light concentrations of the deadly vapour across the Battalion positions and causing numerous casualties. From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. the enemy again shelled the lines of the Alberta Regiment with great violence, using both gas and high explosive, and causing further casualties.

The losses suffered by the Battalion during these two bombardments were the heaviest it had ever experienced in a single day from hostile artillery action while simply holding the line. Five officers and 102 other ranks had to be sent back suffering from the effects of gas poisoning, and on account of these casualties the unit was withdrawn from the line to the brigade reserve positions in the Buissy Switch.

All through the next day the artillery of both sides kept up a continual bombardment, while the persistent rain put the trenches in a very bad condition and made them anything but comfortable. A draft of 31 other ranks reported for duty with the Alberta Regiment during the day. That night the rain continued, and the artillery on both sides, proceeded with its bombardment with unabated vigour.

The weather remained cold and wet, and the Canadian positions and rearward areas continued to suffer from the persistent fire of the enemy guns. Shortly before midnight on September 10th the 31st Battalion returned to the line, relieving the 27th.

On the following evening the enemy sent a cloud of gas across the trenches occupied by the Alberta unit, killing one man and putting 22 others out of action, most of the casualties being in C Company. On the night of September 12th the Battalion was again relieved, this time by the 18th Battalion of the 4th Brigade.

By this time the rain and the heavy traffic had reduced the roads in the neighbourhood to a terrible state. The relief was delayed, and the march out difficult. It was 6:00 a.m. on September 13th before the last platoon reached camp in divisional reserve in Upton Wood, near Hendecourt.

In the days which followed the men rested and refitted. The enemy artillery maintained its persistent shelling of the whole Canadian area, while his air force was extremely active. A number of British observation balloons were shot down in flames, and bombs were scattered freely for many miles behind the front lines. Aerial combats were of daily occurrence, in which sometimes the British and sometimes the German airmen were successful.

On September 18th the 31st Battalion left the area, marching to Croisilles, where the men entrained for Agnez les Duisans. On the following day a number of officer reinforcements, many of whom were rejoining their comrades after having been wounded or gassed, reported to the Battalion for duty and were posted to the companies. Of these, Lieuts. R. Calvert, R. Ferrie and W. H. French were original members of the unit and had been promoted from the ranks; Lieuts. C. McDiarmid, D. Richardson, A. J. Talbourdet, A. H. Freudemacher and D. M. McKenzie, M.C., M.M., had all seen previous service with the Battalion, while the party was completed by Lieut. R. H. Barnes, who was destined to be killed within a month, and Lieut. J. C. Cadham.

At Agnez les Duisans the 31st Battalion went into strenuous training. Tactical exercises, musketry, bombing, machine-gun practice and sports filled every hour of daylight. On September the 20th an entirely pleasant function was held when the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., gave a dinner

to the Battalion to commemorate the third anniversary of its arrival in France.

III.

While the units of the Canadian Corps had been fighting their way forward to their new positions along the Canal du Nord the Allied forces had maintained their attacks at other points of the front. Hard pressed by the British on the west and the French on the south, the Germans were withdrawing sullenly from the salient east of Amiens. Fighting stubborn rearguard actions, the enemy was slowly yielding up the ground which he had won at so much cost in men and material six months before. By the end of August Bapaume had fallen to the British and Noyon to the French, who had also taken Chaulnes and Nesle.

Further north British forces were harassing the Germans along the Flanders salient, and Bailleul had been re-occupied. Immediately to the south of the Canadian line of advance British forces, conforming to the movement, had liberated a large area and had taken Croisilles, Bullecourt, Queant and a number of other small towns and villages.

On September 1st the Australians had crossed the Somme and entered Peronne. During the following week the French reached the Aisne between Conde and Vieil-Arcy and had occupied Chauny, Ham and Tergnier, while the British had re-entered the old defensive system which they had constructed and occupied prior to the great German offensive in March. By this time the enemy had lost all but a small part of the ground which he had won in his great drive for Amiens.

Wherever they struck the Allies made progress; but, except where the Germans were deliberately falling back, it was not facile progress. By this time the Germans had definitely lost the initiative, and even their optimistic General Staff must have realized this fact; but the enemy was not yet demoralized. He still accepted defeat reluctantly and after heavy fighting only; and his line, although battered and dented, was still unbroken.

Meanwhile the Canadian Corps, checked by the Canal du Nord, was preparing for further action. From the heights of Oissy-le-Verger, just beyond the canal, the Germans commanded

the Canadian positions from the marshes of the Sensee River on the north to beyond the Arras-Cambrai Road on the south. The canal itself was about 100 feet wide, and was flooded as far south as the lock situated a mile and a half inside the southern boundary of the Corps' frontage. South of this the canal was dry; but throughout its length it was strongly wired and protected, and armed with innumerable machine guns.

To carry the canal by direct frontal attack was a virtual impossibility. On account of the dominating German positions at Oisy-le-Verger, artillery could not be brought forward beyond the Lecluse-Recourt-Villers-les-Cagnicourt-Buissy line without exposing it in the open to direct fire of the enemy's batteries. As this line ran at a distance of from 4,000 to 5,000 yards to the west of the German positions on the canal, the range was too long for effective support from the field artillery and howitzers. To attempt to cross the canal without bridges or the strongest artillery barrage, would be to court disaster.

The northern flank of the German line along the canal was protected by the marshes of the Sensee River. There was a possibility, however, of turning the position from the British right flank by storming the canal further south, where it was not flooded. Such an offensive movement was altogether beyond the scope of a single corps, and until September 27th operations in this area were suspended.

During the last week in September there were three major offensives in progress along the Western Front. On the right flank of the Allied line French and American forces were attacking along the Sedan-Mezieres-Hirson front, striking in a north-easterly direction; in the centre the British armies, with the strong Canadian Corps as their spear-head, were driving against the Cambrai-St. Quentin defences; on the left flank combined forces of Britain, France and Belgium were operating from the coast to Bethune.

Of these three separate offensives, that directed at the centre of the German line was the one of vital importance. If the enemy positions could be penetrated at this point, and the lines of communication centering at Maubeuge brought under the fire of the British artillery, the arteries which fed the German armies to

both the north and south would be severed. This would place the whole line in serious jeopardy, and would probably result in the crumbling of the carefully prepared German positions from Switzerland to the Channel.

The German General Staff was intensely aware of this situation, and extremely worried by the irresistible advance of the Canadian and British forces in this vital area. Following the initial drive of the men of the Dominion the enemy, fighting desperately, had commenced a voluntary retirement in the region of the Somme in order to shorten his line. The troops thus released were put into the threatened sector of his front as fast as they became available, and every gun that could be spared was brought, with all possible dispatch, to the area. The German defensive system all along this part of the line was extremely strong and well organized; but the experience of the Drocourt-Queant Switch had taught the German General Staff that the strongest of positions availed little against the attacks of determined and highly trained infantry when supported by tanks, armoured cars and a sufficiently heavy artillery barrage.

By September 27th the British Third and Fourth Armies, commanded respectively by Gen. Byng and Gen. Rawlinson, had reached, and were threatening, the powerful Hindenburg Line from Cambrai to St. Quentin. On their left the First Army, under Gen. Horne, which included the Canadian Corps, lay along the Canal du Nord, the Sensee River and northward astride the Arras-Douai railway.

The British offensive, which was timed to begin on September 27th, involved a great forward movement in which all three armies would co-operate. Its ultimate aim was the capture of Cambrai and the rolling up of the German armies to the north and south.

The task of the Canadian divisions in the first phase of the operations was to force the passage of the Canal du Nord south of Sains-les-Marquion, where its bed was dry; then, spreading out fanwise east and north, to seize the high ground in the neighbourhood of the famous Bourlon Wood. This Wood commanded the country in the vicinity of Cambrai, and its occupation would secure the right flank of the general scheme of attack. In the event of the assault on the Wood proving successful, the Dominion troops were to push on and capture the bridge heads

of the Canal de l'Escaut. The 11th British Division and a battalion of tanks were placed under the command of General Currie to co-operate in the attack.

The initial advance upon the strong positions along the canal was to be launched upon a narrow front between Inchy and Moeuvres. The latter village was located on the canal about two miles to the south of the previous southern boundary of the Canadian Corps' frontage. Thus the whole line had to move to the right through this distance. The new frontage, when the units were all in position, stretched from Moeuvres on the right to a point about a mile north of the Arras-Cambrai Road. The town of Cambrai lay some $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles due east of Inchy.

The length of the new Canadian line was 6,400 yards, and opposite its northern wing the canal was flooded for a distance of 3,800 yards. Into the balance of the frontage all the troops of assault, with their supporting artillery, tanks, engineering material, transport and medical services, had to be packed; and it all had to be done without the enemy realising what was going on.

The positions to be attacked were extremely strong. The canal itself was a great field fortification, heavily wired and thickly planted with machine-gun emplacements. Bourlon Wood, some two miles east of the canal, was a great machine-gun redoubt, deeply entrenched and webbed with wire. Every village in the area was a veritable nest of machine guns and every natural feature of the landscape which lent itself to such a purpose had been armed and fortified. Between the canal and the wood yet another line, known as the Marquion Line, had been constructed. It was deeply dug and well wired.

Beyond the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, to the east of Bourlon Wood, ran a double line of trenches known as the Marcoing Line. This system formed a main spur of the Hindenburg Line itself. Further back still was the railway embankment, covered thickly with belts of wire and with a machine gun for every twenty yards.

To the north-east, in the angle formed by the Scheldt and Sensee Rivers, lay a plateau cut up by ravines running, generally, from north-east to south-west, and forming ridges which were extremely difficult to attack. One of these—the narrow wooded valley running through Bantigny to Blecourt—was destined to

be one of the most difficult positions to capture in the whole operation.

The initial attack between Inchy and Moeuvres was to be undertaken by the 4th Canadian Division; its objectives were Bourlon and Bourlon Wood. To the north the 1st Division was to continue the attack, with the villages of Sains-les-Marquion and Marquion as its objectives. On the south of the 4th Division troops of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division were to attack in the direction of the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame. When these objectives had been attained the front was to be extended to 10,000 yards, and the attack pressed in an easterly and north-easterly direction into the angle between the Scheldt and Sensee rivers. At this stage, should the battle proceed according to plan, the 3rd Canadian Division would come into the line on the right of the 4th Division and the 11th British Division on the left of the 1st Canadian Division. By this manoeuvre Cambrai would be pinched out between the Canadian Corps on the north and the XVII British Corps on the south. Throughout the earlier stages of the battle the 2nd Division was to be held in reserve.

IV.

Promptly at 5:20 a.m. on September 27th the barrage came down. It was of pulverising intensity. Then with an irresistible rush, the 10th Brigade of the 4th Canadian Division went through the shattered defences of the canal and established itself firmly on the eastern side. Passing through their comrades, the 11th and 12th Brigades commenced their dash up the slope for Bourlon Wood. On the left the attack was checked during the afternoon by the heavy resistance of a fresh German division, which had just come in to reinforce the line; but eventually the objective was gained. On the right the plans for "pinching out" Bourlon Wood were spoiled by reason of the British troops failing to get through simultaneously. Major-General Sir David Watson immediately altered his plans to meet the changed situation, and by noon the wood was taken. Then the 12th Brigade went on through to the village, and the objectives of the 4th Division had been attained.

On the left of the 4th Division the 1st and 3rd Brigades of the 1st Division had also gone through the canal, and had then

swung north and later west, surrounding the village of Sains-lez-Marquion. From this point the 3rd Brigade went on to capture Keith Wood and Marquion, and finally carried the line up to Sauchy-Lestree. Meanwhile the 2nd Brigade, advancing later, passed through and pressed the attack to the "Blue Line," some 3000 yards east of Marquion, which was reached about 2:00 p.m. Some two hours later the 11th British Division joined the 2nd Canadian Brigade, and the advance was continued. By nightfall the attack had been pushed forward beyond Epinoy and over the Cambrai-Douai Road. Most of the Germans had been driven, by this time, from the canal system, and those groups which had not been able to get away were in danger of encirclement and capture.

During the first day the Canadians captured some 5,000 un-wounded prisoners, 102 guns and hundreds of machine-guns.

The next phase in the operations can be best described in the words of the dispatch of the Corps Commander, which reads, in part, as follows:

"The attack was continued on the 28th. The 3rd Canadian Division captured Fontaine-Notre-Dame (one of the XVII Corps objectives), and, penetrating the Marcoing Line, reached the western outskirts of Ste. Olle. The 4th Canadian Division captured Raillencourt and Sailly, and the 11th (Imperial) Division established posts in Aubencheul-au-Bac and occupied the Bois-de-Quesnoy. The 1st Canadian Division, in view of their advance of the previous day, which had produced a considerable salient, did not push forward.

"Heavy fighting characterized the 29th. The 3rd Canadian Division, the 4th Canadian Division, and the 1st Canadian Division all made progress in the face of severe opposition. The 3rd Canadian Division pushed the line forward to the junction of the Arras and Baupaume Road, the western outskirts of Neuville St. Remy and the Douai-Cambrai Road. They also cleared the Marquion Line from the Bapaume-Cambrai Road southwards towards the Canal de l'Escaut. These trenches were in the XVII Corps area, but it was difficult for our attack to progress leaving on its flank and rear this strongly held position. The 4th Canadian Division captured Sancourt, crossed the Douai-Cambrai Railway and entered Blecourt, but later with-

drew to the line of the railway in the face of a heavy counter-attack. The necessity for this withdrawal was accentuated by the situation on the left. The 11th Division, in spite of two attempts, had been unable to occupy the high ground north-east of Epinoy."

Three days of hard fighting had brought the Canadians to the edge of the plateau between the Scheldt and the Sencee rivers. At this time the 3rd Division was on the right, the 4th in the centre and the 1st Division on the left. All three divisions had been through strenuous actions, had suffered serious casualties, and were meeting the most obstinate resistance from the enemy. The latter was holding the plateau in strength, and seemed determined to stand his ground at all costs.

On September 30th bitter fighting developed on the front of these divisions. Just north of Cambrai the 3rd Division made progress, crossing the railway and occupying the village of Tilloy; but the advance had been most strenuously opposed and the ground gained had been dearly paid for. Further north the wearied and weakened 4th Division had also pushed forward but, after reaching Blecourt, it was compelled to fall back on Sancourt without reaching its objective.

It was clear by this time that the Canadian Divisions, after four days of continuous and heavy fighting, had reached the end of their tether, and could not be expected to make further head against the strong and determined forces opposed to them. More striking power was needed to drive home the attack. This involved bringing up fresh troops and a redistribution of the forces of attack.

V.

While these events had been in progress the 31st Battalion, with its sister units of the 2nd Division, had been held in reserve.

Until the day before the opening of the offensive the Alberta unit had continued strenuous training at Agnez les Duisans. It then moved forward by bus as far as Bullecourt, and at 9:30 p.m. on September 27th went into position in the Inchy area. The night passed quietly, but the rain, which fell persistently, did its best to make things uncomfortable for the men. At 2 o'clock

on the following afternoon the Battalion again moved forward to Quarry Wood, between the canal and Bourlon, where it spent the night. On September 29th battle equipment and rations were issued, and the companies were warned to be ready to move on two hours' notice. Patrols were immediately sent out to reconnoitre the forward area, but the afternoon passed without the expected orders to move arriving.

It was not until 7:30 p.m. on Monday, September 30th, that the 31st Battalion at last went forward. By this time the 2nd Division was in close support of the units of assault. The 1st, 3rd and 4th Divisions had already taken up position for the attack timed for the following morning, the aim of which was to secure the crossings of the canal north of Cambrai.

At a little before 3:00 a.m. on October 1st, the 6th Brigade went into position, and very shortly afterwards the attack was launched. The mission allotted to the Brigade was to move forward in close support of the left flank of the 3rd Canadian Division, and to push across the Canal de l'Escaut and exploit the situation to the best advantage as soon as the bridge heads had been secured.

The 27th Battalion occupied the right position in the Brigade frontage and the 28th Battalion on the left, with the 29th in support and the 31st in reserve. At first progress on the left was slow, but as the morning wore on, the advance increased in momentum. The enemy shelling was very severe, and he appeared determined to hold his ground at all costs.

At about noon disquieting rumors began to drift back from the battle line. These were confirmed by reconnaissance parties sent forward from the village of Sancourt. It soon became clear that all three divisions engaged in the assault were having a hard time and meeting with a most strenuous opposition. Throughout the whole area the German artillery fire was heavy, and his aircraft continually harassed the attacking troops with bombs and machine gun fire. At 1:30 p.m. the 29th Battalion was sent forward to support the left flank of the advance, while the 31st remained in reserve and dug itself in.

At 3:45 p.m. Brig.-Gen. A. H. Bell was struck in the right breast by a shell splinter while he was watching the progress of the operations from the railways embankment before Sancourt.

Luckily the injury was not dangerous, although of sufficient seriousness to necessitate his immediate evacuation to the rear.

When night came further progress had been made all along the line; but it had been slow and painful progress, purchased at a high price. By this time the attacking divisions were exhausted by the continual fighting, and their battalions were weakened and disorganized by the casualties which they had suffered. It was decided, therefore, to break off the action for the time being.

Throughout the night the enemy shelled heavily the positions occupied by the Canadian troops, and all the next day the 31st Battalion lay under heavy hostile gun fire awaiting further orders. At dusk the enemy attacked the 5th Brigade, and the Battalion was ordered to stand-to for about an hour; but the attack was repulsed. Again at 11:30 p.m. a strong assault was launched against the left flank of the 6th Brigade from the Bantigny ravine; but it also was driven off with heavy losses.

By the morning of October 3rd the rain had ceased, and the day broke bright and clear. Anticipating an enemy counter-attack, the Canadian artillery put down a heavy barrage just after dawn. During the day the German artillery remained active, shelling the positions of the 31st Battalion intermittently, but doing little damage, only two men being killed and eight wounded. In the afternoon enemy aircraft bombed and machine-gunned the lines.

On this date Capt. R. Wooley-Dod and Lieuts. W. K. Jull, A. S. Van Dusen and J. O'Hara returned to the Alberta unit, and were posted to their commands.

Throughout October 4th heavy shell fire was maintained upon the Canadian lines. On the following day the Battalion Commander, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., proceeded to England on duty and Lieut.-Col. Nelson Spencer assumed his command. That night the 31st Battalion relieved the 27th in the front line, east and south-east of Sancourt.

The next few days passed without notable event. Patrols were pushed out every night; but, in the main, had little to report. The enemy shelled the line heavily, but spasmodically, and his aircraft were active in bombing and machine-gunning. Apart from these usual features, the enemy was quiet. For the moment both German and Canadian were content to rest after the fierce fighting of the past week.

VI.

As a fitting commentary on these actions an abstract from General Currie's special order to his men, under the date of October 3rd, is quoted:

"The mission assigned to the Corps was the protection of the flanks of the Third and Fourth British Armies and that mission has been carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Commander-in-Chief. In your advance you overcome the very formidable obstacle of the Canal du Nord, you carried by assault the fortified Bourlon Wood and the Marcoing Line, and seized the high ground extending along the Douai-Cambrai Road. The towns of Oisy-le-Verger, Epiony, Haynecourt, Marquion, Sains-lez-Marquion, Sancourt, Bourlon, Fontaine-Notre-Dame, Sailly, Ste. Olle, Neuville, St. Remy, and Tilloy are ours and your patrols have entered Cambrai itself.

"How arduous the task assigned to you can be judged by the fact that whereas in the operations of the First, Third and Fourth Armies, thirty-six enemy divisions have been engaged, twelve of these divisions, supported by eleven independent machine-gun units, have been met and defeated by the Canadian Corps.

"Even of greater importance, you have wrested sixty-nine towns and villages and over 175 square miles of French soil from the defiling Hun.

"In two months you have, with the three British divisions which have been attached to the corps, encountered and defeated decisively forty-seven German Divisions—one-quarter of the whole German forces on the Western Front."

VII.

Following the fighting of October 1st, during which the Canadian Corps had met with such stubborn resistance, the action was temporarily broken off to enable the forces of assault to rest and reorganize. The lull lasted for over a week, during which the new positions occupied by the troops of the Dominion were strengthened and consolidated. This work was carried out under the most persistent hostile shell fire, the weight of which indicated that the enemy was in no mood to yield easily any further ground.

As yet the task of the Canadian Divisions had not been entirely accomplished. The western outskirts of Cambrai had been entered, but the town itself was still in the hands of the enemy.

Meanwhile the Third British Army, working south of Cambrai, had crossed the Canal de l'Escaut between Crevecoeur and Proville, and had before it an open plain with but little in the way of defensive works to oppose its progress. This success by the troops operating on the Canadian right was another important step towards the planned envelopment and "pinching out" of the town of Cambrai.

It was not until the early hours of October 9th that the operations to the north of the town were resumed. On that day the Canadian Corps, in conjunction with the XVII British Corps on the right, resumed the offensive.

The 2nd Division was selected for the left of the attack, with all three brigades in the line, and the 3rd Division on the right. To the 5th Brigade on the right of the divisional frontage was assigned the seizure of the bridgeheads crossing the Canal de l'Escaut at Morenchies and Pont D'Aire, after which the attack was to be pushed forward to Escaudoeuvres. On the left the 6th Brigade, now led by Brig.-Gen. A. Ross, was to act as flank guard and advance in the direction of the town of Ramillies, while to the 4th Brigade was assigned the duty of working down the canal valley and, passing through the 5th Brigade, exploit any success which the latter might have attained.

The ground upon which the 2nd Division was compelled to assemble, and over which the advance had to be made, was very unfavourable. From north of Tilloy eastward to Ramillies lies a wide flat-topped ridge. This lay right in the middle of the divisional frontage, was devoid of cover and very open to enemy fire. From this ridge the open ground slopes gently down towards Morenchies on the south and Ramillies on the east. Northward of the ridge is a deep valley, beyond which another flat-topped ridge runs north-eastward from Cuvillers to a point just south of Paillencourt. North-west of this spur lies another valley, commonly known as Bantigny Ravine. Just south of the village of Thun St. Martin is yet another group of low hills, and the whole country in this neighbourhood is little more than a succession of small elevations and table-lands with their intervening valleys,

for the most part bare and without cover for troops. Only along the banks of the canal itself a certain amount of cover is afforded by the houses and trees, the eastern bank in particular being heavily wooded.

It was over this difficult country that the Canadian troops had to advance. At the time of the attack the enemy's line ran some 500 yards to the west of the canal at Morenches and about 1000 west of it near Ramillies, while further north the villages of Cuvillers and Abancourt were in his possession.

Owing to the open and exposed ground between the Canadian positions and the canal, it was decided to attack under cover of darkness and thus minimize the effects of machine-gun fire. Under these circumstances a creeping barrage was not possible, and the artillery bombardment was limited to selected areas at stated times. In order to discourage any large concentration of the enemy in the Bantigny Ravine, 1000 drums of gas were released into it on the night of October 7th. At the same time the 6th Brigade pushed out a screen of posts between Blecourt and Cuvillers in preparation for the advance on Ramillies.

The task of the 31st Battalion was to form a defensive flank to the 6th Brigade, and by 4:30 a.m. on October 8th all the companies had worked forward into their battle positions. The Battalion was disposed for action with C Company assembled on the Cambrai-Douai Road, and D Company holding a position some 200 yards to its rear; B Company was in reserve, and had to dig itself in, while A Company formed the right flank of the Battalion. Report centres had been established and aid posts for the wounded located.

While the men of the 31st Battalion were getting into position on the night before the attack they were harassed by machine guns firing from a sunken road on the left flank. At the time Lieut. W. K. Jull and some of the Battalion Scout Section were guiding three platoons of A Company into position in the neighbourhood of this road, an operation which was much impeded by the bursts of machine-gun fire. Lieut. Jull, accompanied by Pte. R. De Castro, immediately advanced upon the troublesome machine-gun posts and, attacking with great determination, bombed them out, taking nine prisoners and two machine guns. For this gallant

action Lieut. Jull was awarded the Military Cross, and his companion the Military Medal.

The night was one of pouring rain, with its attendant darkness. At midnight, in the lashing rain, the men of the Alberta Regiment prepared themselves for the attack. White arm bands were worn by the troops in order that they might distinguish friend from foe, and orders had been issued that the gas-drenched Bantigny Ravine was to be rigorously avoided by the attacking troops.

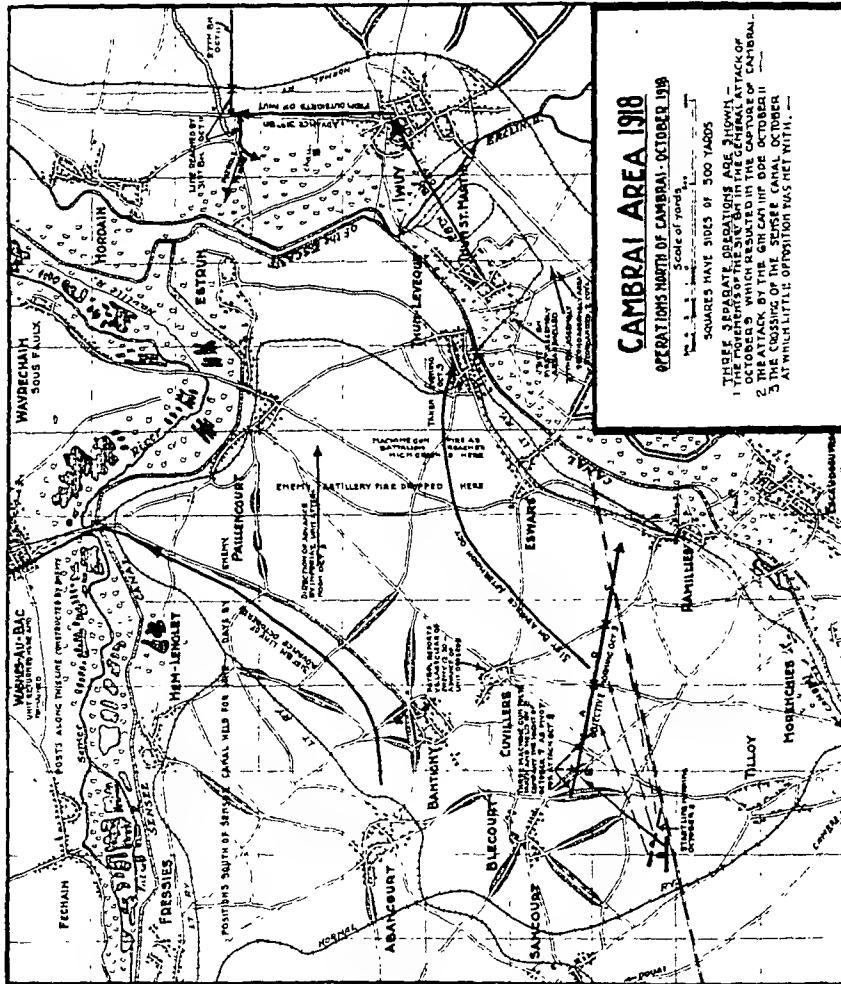
During the night two companies of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps joined the 31st Battalion, and at 1:30 a.m. on October 9th the advance commenced.

The attack was opened by the 5th Brigade on the right of the divisional frontage; it met with swift and complete success. Advancing silently towards the canal, it took the Germans by surprise as they were in the act of withdrawal, and threw them into complete confusion. In a very short time the bridges at Morencies and Pont d'Aire had been secured, and by 8:00 a.m. the Brigade was beyond Escaudoeuvre, and established on its objective.

Meanwhile the 6th Brigade had pushed forward for the attack on Ramillies, and with it the 31st Battalion. As soon as the zero hour arrived C Company pivoted upon its left flank in the assembly positions and, straightening its line, commenced to advance through heavy gas fumes thrown over by the enemy. Within an hour this company had consolidated its position as flank guard to the Battalion with very little opposition from the enemy apart from the gas.

An hour later D Company, which had followed in the rear of C Company, had pivoted on the right of the latter, had "mopped up" the captured territory, taking 80 un wounded prisoners in the process, and was established on its objective. Lewis guns were immediately posted to cover the road from Cuvillers to Ramilles and Pont d'Aire, and the work of consolidation was promptly commenced. As in the case of C Company, D Company had completed its mission without meeting serious opposition.

No sooner had D Company secured its objective than the 27th Battalion went through to carry the attack forward to Ra-



millies. By 2:25 a.m. the Winnipeg unit had captured the village and had pushed its patrols a considerable distance beyond without opposition from the enemy.

Meanwhile C and A Companies, with D Company as a defensive flank on the left, pushed on through Cuvillers. They searched the village, and pushed patrols out to a distance of nearly a mile beyond, but could find no sign of the enemy.

By 1:30 p.m. the initial advance of the 31st Battalion had been completed. The village of Cuvillers had been occupied, and the positions of the companies had also been reorganized with C Company on the right, A in the centre and B on the left, D Company being held in reserve. So far the casualties had been very light.

In the meantime the attack to the south had progressed with equal rapidity and success. Of the advance of the 5th Brigade mention has already been made. By dawn the 8th Brigade of the 3rd Division (Canadian Mounted Rifles) was across the canal and into Cambrai. Here only a small evacuation party was found; and the Canadian troops set to work to get under control the fires which the retreating Germans had started with a view to destroying the town. By 11:00 a.m. both the Dominion troops and the units of the XVII British Corps, who had succeeded in establishing contact with the right flank of the Canadian advance, were beyond the city.

So successful had been the advance all along the line, and so feeble the resistance of the enemy, that quite early in the day orders had been issued to continue the attack and exploit the advantage gained to the utmost. Orders to press forward reached the 31st Battalion at 2:00 p.m.

By this time the general position along the whole line of advance was, roughly, as follows:

To the south the XVII Corps had occupied Cauroir and Cagnoncles, some three miles to the east of Cambrai; on the north the 11th British Division, which had been placed at the disposal of the Canadian Corps Commander for the operations, had taken Abancourt after stiff fighting and was advancing on Paillencourt; it was supported on its right by the 29th Battalion, which formed the left wing of the 2nd Canadian Division; the 31st Battalion, in the centre of the 6th Brigade frontage, was in occupation of Cuvillers, with orders to advance to Thun Leveque, while on its

right the 27th Battalion had thrown its companies across the canal and had conformed to the general advance. The 28th Battalion was in brigade reserve.

Upon resuming the attack the 6th Brigade was to go forward with Thun Leveque on its left flank and Ramillies on its right flank as far as the Canal l'Escaut, while on its left two British Brigades were to advance as far as the Canal de la Sensee..

VIII.

The advance was resumed at 4:00 p.m. The companies of the 31st Battalion were disposed in artillery formation, and went forward in the face of severe shell fire. It soon became evident that the enemy was preparing to make a stand, and that the facile advance of the early morning had ended.

When the Battalion was about 1000 yards west of Thun Leveque the hostile artillery put down a severe barrage along the whole line of advance. It failed to stop the resolute progress of the long lines of Canada's fighting men. The Companies went through and proceeded to climb to the high ground in front of the village. Here machine gun after machine gun came suddenly into action from the left, and swept the ranks of the 31st Battalion with a deadly enfilade fire. It soon became clear that the covering battalions on the left of the Alberta Regiment had pulled away to the north-west, leaving the flank unprotected.

Burst after burst of machine-gun fire swept the Battalion front. In a few moments six men had been killed. Lieut. D. Richmond had fallen, mortally wounded, to die within a few hours, while Capt. A. Blair, Lieut. J. B. Copeland and 24 other ranks were wounded. B Company, however, continued to advance in spite of the casualties inflicted by the machine-gun barrage, and managed to get up to within 100 yards of the village.

By this time dusk was falling. A and C Companies, on the right of B Company, had been held up by severe shell and machine-gun fire, and had been unable to get forward. It therefore became necessary for B Company to withdraw its advanced position in order to conform with the other two Companies.

When darkness fell Cuvillers and Bantigny were in Canadian hands. The 6th Brigade was held up in front of Thun Leveque, while southwards the 5th Brigade was approaching Naves.

For the Canadian Corps it had been another day of marked success, achieved at a comparatively low cost in casualties. To the south the attack had penetrated the enemy positions to a depth of some five miles; on the extreme north of the 2nd Divisional frontage, owing to the gas-drenched Bantigny Ravine, the advance had been limited to less than two miles. During the day a large number of prisoners and many machine guns had been taken.

Under cover of darkness the men of the 31st Battalion worked their way towards the village of Thun Leveque, and by 10:00 p.m. were close up to its outskirts. From the village the fire of machine guns systematically traversed the Battalion frontage, and was replied to by rifle fire of Canadian snipers. At 11:45 p.m. orders were received to advance at dawn and capture the village. Operation plans for the following day called for the clearing of the area around Thun Leveque by the 6th Brigade. After this had been accomplished the divisional boundary was to be the line of the Canal l'Escaut, which at this point runs almost due north to join the Sensee River. On the eastern side of the canal the 4th and 6th Brigades were then to press northwards, while Brutinel's Brigade of machine guns was to operate along the road to Iwuy. This road was to form the boundary between the two brigades.

As on the previous day, the territory over which the advance had to be made was open, and afforded little cover for the attacking troops. The villages scattered throughout the area had suffered little damage from shell-fire, and afforded good positions for machine-gun emplacements.

Throughout the night strong patrols were pushed forward by the 31st Battalion, and in the early hours of the morning a number of enemy posts were encountered. These were captured with but little resistance on the part of the enemy.

At 5:30 a.m. on October 10th the Battalion took up its positions of assault. C Company held position on the right of the line, and B Company on the left, with A Company in the centre and D Company in reserve. The artillery put down an effective barrage on the western outskirts of the village, which lasted for about 15 minutes. It then lifted, and began to play upon the village of Thun St. Martin and the woods to the south-west. It was then that the 31st Battalion commenced to move.

The enemy machine-gunners in Thun Leveque had not been subdued by the artillery barrage. They met the advance of the 31st Battalion with fierce machine-gun fire. This advance had, however, commenced with an encircling movement, and by 7 o'clock the village was in the hands of the men of Alberta and the bridgeheads of the Canal de l'Escaut had been seized.

Meanwhile, to the east of the Canal, the 4th Brigade had moved forward. In a very short time its units had pushed beyond Naves and down the Erclin River. On the western bank of the canal Thun St. Martin had fallen to a gallant attack by the 29th Battalion.

Further progress that day was destined, however, to be limited. The 6th Brigade, pushing on towards Erclin, was checked before the village of Iwuy, in line with the 4th Brigade, by the determined resistance offered by large numbers of German machine-gunners, and could not pass the river before dusk. Late in the day elements of the 4th Brigade crossed the river and made notable progress; but while daylight lasted the advance was held up.

The 11th British Division, operating on the left flank of the Canadian Corps, had also made progress during the day. It had cleared out the area between the Sensee and Scheldt, and had taken Estrun. It had also entered Hem Lenglet, but could get no further, as the enemy had destroyed all bridges and flooded the area.

IX.

The 31st Battalion spent the remainder of October 10th in digging in and consolidating its new positions. A number of patrols were also sent out to reconnoitre the woods in front. A patrol of D Company reached the edge of the timber, but could get no further on account of enemy snipers and machine guns which were established in the cover of the trees. This patrol shot down two of the enemy snipers, but was unable to return across the open ground until darkness fell.

The wooded country which fronted the 31st Battalion positions offered excellent cover for the German riflemen and machine-gunners, and all day long a lively fight went on between the snipers of the opposing forces. In this the men of the 31st Battalion more than held their own, accounting for some 30 of the enemy during the day. As night came down the German artillery shelled the positions of the Battalion with gas, causing six casualties.

At 10:00 p.m. orders were received that the Alberta unit was to continue the attack on the following day, and the Battalion Commander proceeded to Brigade Headquarters^b for detailed instructions. Upon his return operation orders were issued, and the troops were warned to be in their assembly positions by 8:30 a.m. on the following morning.

X.

October 11th—one month before the Armistice; the final pages in the history of the greatest and bloodiest of all wars were being written.

Less than seven months earlier the triumphant legions of the Central Empires had been smashing through the British lines and driving before them a disorganized and seemingly beaten enemy. Only the dogged pertinacity of the British, only their refusal to accept defeat, stood between the German General Staff and a triumphant termination of the war.

With dramatic suddenness the whole situation had been reversed; and now, in these early autumn days, the Allied forces were striking all along the front and everywhere the dismayed armies of the Central Empires were reeling back towards decisive defeat.

A combined Belgian and British offensive, on a wide front between Dixmude and Ploegsteert, had driven the enemy from the Houthulst Forest, and had reoccupied Passchendaele, Gheluvelt, Messines and a number of other towns and villages. To the south of Cambrai, St. Quentin had been taken by the French, while to the north-west of that city British and American troops had stormed the main Hindenburg defences on the eastern bank of the Scheldt Canal. Between the Vesle and the Aisne the Germans were in full retreat, and from Armentieres southward towards Lens the enemy forces were falling back in the direction of Lille.

In the face of such disasters even the optimistic German General Staff could no longer hope, and in his memoirs General Ludendorff admits that, by this time, he was in despair. Disorganization and demoralization had set in; and although many German units were still fighting with dogged determination, and contesting every foot of Allied advance, many others had broken

without offering any serious opposition. Prisoners were surrendering themselves more readily, and often willingly and voluntarily, and the rearguards of retiring armies were resisting less stubbornly.

Credit must be given, however, to the German machine-gunners at this stage in the struggle. These men of whom there were great numbers, were carefully picked and thoroughly trained, and fought their guns with skill and courage until the last minute, often choosing death in preference to surrender. They exacted their toll from the advancing Allied battalions, and more than once held the attack in check.

XI.

The Canadian advance north-east of Cambrai was to be resumed at 9:00 a.m. on October 11th. The attack of the 2nd Division was to be continued by the 4th and 6th Brigades. The latter was assigned the duty of cleaning up the situation at Iwuy and then of advancing upon St. Amand and Hordain. The objective of the 4th Brigade was Avesnes le Sec.

On the 5th Brigade front the 28th Battalion held the right position between the Erclin River and the sunken road close to the railway. Its line of advance lay in a north-westerly direction through the village of Iwuy. On the left the 29th Battalion was to hold its position from the Canal de l'Escaut to the road, but was to make a demonstration in order to distract the attention of the enemy. Then, as soon as the 28th Battalion had won clear of Iwuy, it was to advance and mop up the line of the Erclin River, after which it was to assume position in brigade reserve. Meanwhile the 27th and 31st Battalions were to be ready to advance at zero hour and keeping contact with the 29th Battalion, were to be in line with the 28th Battalion's final objective 30 minutes after the latter had reached it. The 27th Battalion was then to push on the capture of St. Amand while the 31st Battalion was advancing upon Hordain. The latter, after passing through the village to a distance of 500 yards to the north, was to establish a screen of outposts to protect the left flank of the divisional line.

In conformity with this plan of operation the 31st Battalion was to assemble, in the first place, in support, with the 27th Bat-

talion on its right. After the 28th and 29th Battalions had taken and "mopped up" Iwuy, the companies were to reassemble again forward. C Company was to advance to a position with its right flank on the railway and its left on the river; A and B Companies were then to advance through D Company, the first-named on the left and the other on the right.

The action opened with a heavy bombardment of Iwuy and its immediate vicinity, while field guns put down a smoke-screen to hide the movements of the attacking infantry. Then, promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, October 11th, the Brigade began to move.

No sooner had the advance commenced, however, than German artillery observers, watching the lines of infantry as they moved forward, signalled their batteries, and within a few minutes a devastating barrage had been brought down upon the Canadian formations.

The 31st Battalion, waiting in its assembly positions, came in for a terrific shelling with gas and high explosives. Almost immediately Lieut. H. H. Barnes and 12 other ranks were killed, while Lieuts. A. H. Freudemacher, W. Whyte, M.C., A. J. Talbourdet, and J. C. Hutchinson, with no fewer than 118 other ranks, were wounded.

For a time hell was loose among the men of Alberta. The shells, as they fell, detonated off the trees that covered the Battalion's assembly area, and the wounds caused by the flying shell splinters were terrible. Enemy machine-gunners, realizing that the Regiment was being cut up, poured belt after belt of machine-gun bullets into the area; and the deafening crash of bursting shells, the rending of riven timber and the continual stammer of the machine guns combined in an inferno of din sufficient to strike terror into the heart of the bravest.

To the lasting credit of the 31st Battalion it must be recorded that this terrible punishment at the very start of the day's operations produced neither panic nor confusion, nor did it in any way deter officers and men from proceeding to carry out their allotted tasks in the day's campaign. Quickly, but in good order, the Battalion moved to the right to get away from the zone of the German barrage, and here it proceeded to reorganize. A and C Companies were formed into No. 1 Party, and B and D Companies

into Party No. 2. The former was ordered to advance over the highground as far as Hordain, while the latter had the task of capturing the village and, proceeding through it, of establishing the necessary posts beyond.

At 11:00 a.m. scouts reported that the village of Iwuy had been taken by the 28th Battalion and cleared of the enemy. Immediately No. 1 Party commenced its advance upon the high ground, deployed in artillery formation.

This advance was a little premature, however, with the result that the men of the 31st Battalion found work to do which they had not bargained for. The village of Iwuy is large and scattered and was therefore difficult to mop up. It was also very strongly fortified and strongly held. Thus when No. 1 Party reached the high ground on the northern outskirts of the hamlet, the 28th Battalion had not yet entirely cleared its outlying portions of the enemy. As a consequence, No. 1 Party of the 31st Battalion found that the northern outskirts of the village still sheltered a number of hostile machine guns, while other posts in the woods on the left were still occupied by the enemy. These opened fire as the attacking troops advanced, and prevented them, for a time, from getting forward towards their objective.

No. 1 Party was leading, and first came under fire, while No. 2 Party followed some 200 yards in its rear. Both parties at once commenced to clear up the machine-gun nests with the bayonet; and, after some stiff fighting which caused further casualties in the depleted ranks of the Battalion, the job was satisfactorily completed. Both parties then advanced beyond the village, where they again reorganized. At 1:30 p.m. all was in readiness for a resumption of the advance upon Hordain.

Party No. 1 was now in position on the left of the Battalion frontage, its line extending from the main road through to the canal. No. 2 Party lay on the right, between the main road and the railway, where it linked up with the 27th Battalion on the right.

The advance was continued, and once more the attacking troops came under extremely severe machine-gun fire. From the woods on the left flank of the 31st Battalion enfilade fire swept across the line of advance, while other guns raked its ranks from the front and from positions along the railway on the right. Here

the 27th Battalion had been held up by machine-gun fire, and had found it impossible to get forward.

In spite of the cross-fire from enemy machine guns to which they were exposed, however, the men of Alberta refused to be entirely pinned down. A small group of No. 1 Party advanced along a ditch at the side of the main road and established positions on either side thereof some 200 yards north of Iwuy. From these positions the men engaged the enemy with rifle and Lewis gun and succeeded in beating down his machine gun fire and driving back his riflemen. Another group from the same party made a dash for the woods on the left and, entering the grounds of a chateau located on their outskirts, bayoneted the machine-gunners stationed there and occupied their position. In leading this assault Lieut. J. S. P. Guy, M.C., was badly wounded.

Meanwhile No. 2 Party, under the covering fire of their comrades of Party No. 1, dashed across the open in extended formation and seized a forward position from which to fire on the enemy located in the woods on the Battalion front. This new position endangered that of the enemy, and forced him to withdraw from his cover. As he crossed the open he was caught by the fire of Canadian trench mortar batteries, and suffered severely.

Unfortunately the 27th Battalion had found it impossible to get forward in the face of the heavy German machine-gun barrage, and had been unable to clear the line of the railway. Orders were issued, therefore, to the 31st Battalion to halt its advance, and the men rested in the positions they had won along a line some 1,000 yards short of the final objective — the village of Hordain. Later in the day the 27th Battalion, displaying great determination and dash, managed to push forward and link up with the 31st Battalion.

Both units had suffered serious casualties, and there were insufficient effectives to establish a line to the canal. In order to protect the exposed flank, the line of the 31st Battalion was bent backwards in the arc of a circle which terminated in a strong outpost in the captured grounds of the chateau.

That evening word was received that the 31st Battalion would be relieved during the night. Before going out patrols were sent forward to reconnoitre the woods on the left front. These were found to be clear of the enemy.

At 1:00 a.m., on October 12th, the relief commenced, the line being taken over by battalions of the famous Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. By 2:30 a.m. the companies were marching out of the line, in pouring rain, en route for Eswars. Here the men had breakfast, and a much needed sleep. Later on the same day the troops, still very weary, paraded and marched out for Hayne-court, where they were billeted for the night.

Thus, on the night of October 11th, ended the part played by the 31st Battalion in the advance of the Canadian Corps upon Cambrai, and in the driving of the enemy out of his positions in the surrounding territory. On this day, too, the operations of the Canadian Corps itself in the immediate vicinity of Cambrai came to an end. At 5:00 p.m. an exchange of fronts between the British XXII Corps and the Dominion troops was completed.

As a fitting conclusion to this chapter the comments of the Corps Commander on the entire operation is quoted:

"The Battle of Arras — Cambrai, so fruitful in results, was now closed. Since August 26th the Canadian Corps had advanced 23 miles, fighting for every foot of ground and overcoming the most bitter resistance. In that period the Canadian Corps engaged and defeated decisively 31 German divisions, reinforced by numerous Marksmen Machine Gun Companies. These divisions were met in strongly fortified positions and under conditions most favourable to the defense. In this battle 18,585 prisoners were captured by us, together with 371 guns, 1,923 machine guns, and many trench mortars. Over 116 square miles of French soil, containing 54 towns and villages and including the city of Cambrai, were liberated. The severity of the fighting and the heroism of our troops may be gathered from the casualties suffered between August 22nd and October 11th and which were as follows:

	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Killed	296	4,071
Missing	18	1,912
Wounded	1,230	23,279
 Total	 1,544	 29,262

Considering the great number of German divisions engaged and the tremendous artillery and machine-gun fire power at their disposal, the comparative lightness of our casualties testifies the excellence of the precautions taken by Divisional, Brigade and Regimental Officers, to minimize the loss of life, having ever in mind the performance of their duty and the accomplishment of their heavy task."

From October 1st to October 12th, the 31st Battalion lost 9 officers and 189 other ranks. It captured 260 prisoners, 25 machine guns, 5 tank guns and 12 trench mortars. On October 12th the unit had a trench strength of 19 officers and 419 other ranks, with 2 officers and 63 other ranks in the transport lines

CHAPTER XXV.

The Advance to Valenciennes

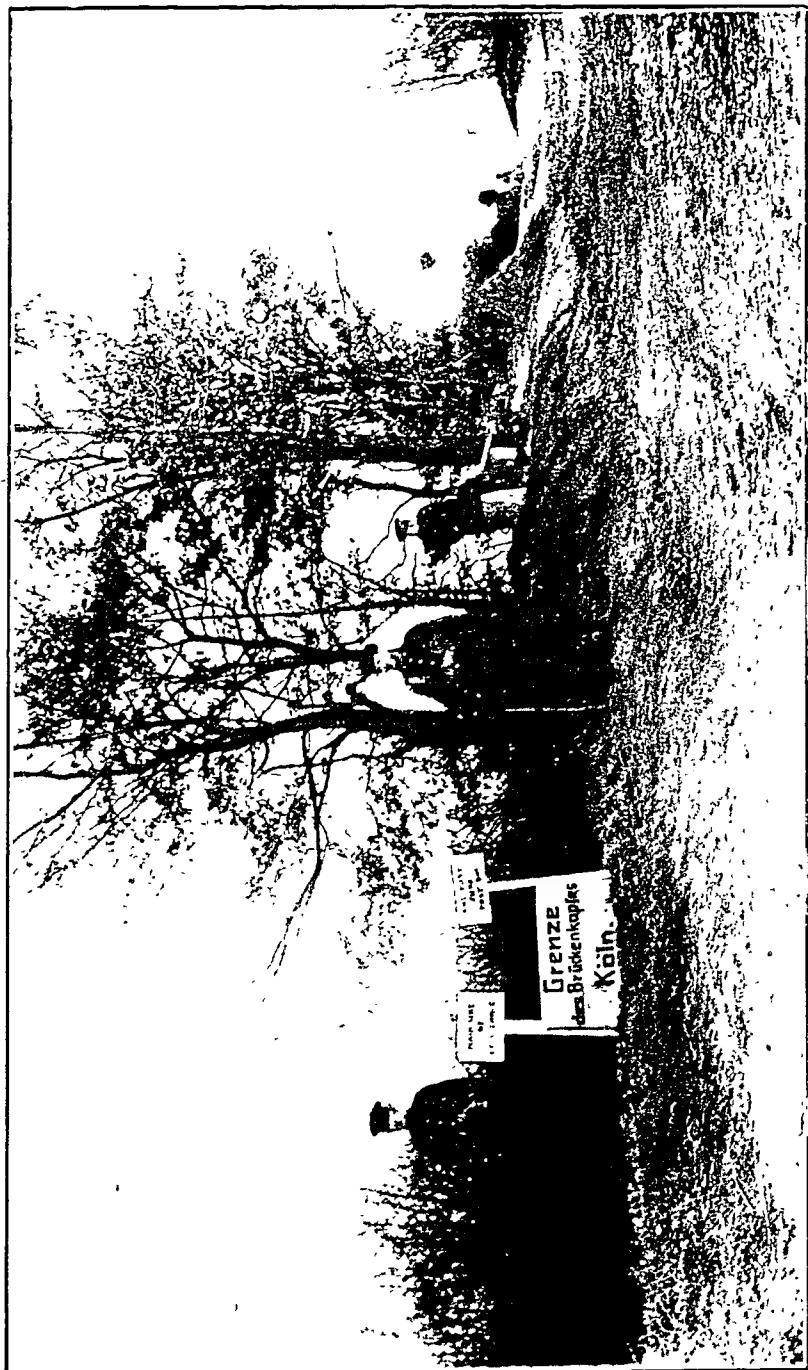
I.

Emerging from the strenuous fighting of the past few weeks unshaken in spirit and morale but with its ranks considerably depleted, the 31st Battalion, on Sunday, October 13, found itself due for one of those speedy reorganizations to which the high intelligence of all ranks made the unit readily adaptable and which never failed to place Canadian units in complete readiness for effective action. Sixty-eight reinforcements were taken on strength but these still left the Battalion numerically weak particularly in respect to Lewis gunners, a great number of whom had become casualties. Since the reinforcements were inadequate, the companies were organized on a three-platoon basis and, in a few hours were prepared again to take their places in the front line.

During the next few weeks, the Battalion was destined to play a supporting role, but further distinction lay in store because "Bell's Bulldogs" went through to end up in the front line on that memorable morning of November 11 southeast of Mons and had the distinction actually of being the first infantry unit to place foot on German soil.

In preparation for any eventuality, the Battalion underwent a rigid inspection of personnel and equipment, a bath parade was conducted at Sancourt on Monday, October 14, and clean clothing was issued.

Orders were received the following day to be prepared for support duty at Abancourt and reconnoitering parties were sent forward to go over the ground. In a cold, dismal rain at dusk on October 16, the Battalion, revived by its three-day recess and encouraged by news of continued successes scored by other Canadian units, went forward quietly but eagerly to take over the



31st Battalion sentries guarding Cologne Bridgehead, Germany, January, 1919.



support positions at Blecourt where the 28th Battalion was successfully relieved by 10.00 p.m.

An air of expectancy prevailed the next day as it became apparent that the advance to Valenciennes would commence shortly. Save for a little hostile shell fire, the next day passed quietly and the forward area was reconnoitred in preparation for a move into the front line at a moment's notice.

October 17 actually marked the commencement of the advance on the next important city to be liberated. For some days there had been indications of an enemy withdrawal on a large scale and during the early morning of this day patrols of the 1st Canadian Division reported that the country on the divisional frontage had been practically cleared of the enemy. The Canal du Nord lay almost undefended.

The front line of the Canadian Corps now followed the Canal de la Sensee in a north-westerly direction from Corbehem to Palluel, and thence along the southern bank of the Sensee River to Etrum. The rapidity of recent advances had brought about a notable change not only in the nature of the country but in methods of fighting. Although the weather was changeable, the mornings frequently dawned with brilliant sunshine that glistened from frost on trees, hedges and grass because the land, no longer a stark, barren, shell-torn wilderness of mud and wreckage, lay in little pastures or cultivated patches from which grain had been harvested. Trees, many of them still in leaf, bore all the colored beauties of an autumn well advanced. Retreating war, in its quickly-moving strides, left its scars mostly along the highways, railways, canals and at bridges, usually demolished. The war was now undergoing a rapid change from the drab stolidity of trench fighting to the more lively, intriguing and adventurous tactics of open warfare with its far-flung patrols, quick skirmishes and sudden assaults. In this phase, the Canadian troops excelled because of the individual initiative of the men and their personal resourcefulness.

Along the line of the Canadian Corps, the 1st Division lay on the left flank with the 4th Division on its right and in the centre of the line. The 2nd Division occupied the right flank and the 3rd Division remained in reserve.

When it was learned that the line of the canal had been left unguarded by the enemy, the 1st Division crossed at once and pushed forward over the Douai-Cambray road. The 4th Division and elements of the 2nd Division, whose lines followed the river, crossed later in the day and, deploying in a north-easterly direction, advanced to conform to the movement of the 1st Division. By nightfall, the Canadian line had been advanced an average distance of about three miles and patrols of the 1st Division had entered the town of Douai on the north of the Corps boundary.

A heavy fog settled over the entire area during the night and through this at 4.00 a.m. on the morning of October 18, the 31st Battalion went forward upon receipt of orders to move up to the river. Considerable delay was experienced by the men who found it difficult to keep their bearings in the foggy darkness. "C" Company was missing for about an hour but finally found the river crossing — a temporary wooden bridge built by the Engineers, the Germans having demolished the permanent crossing at that point. By noon, however, the entire Battalion had effected a crossing and was advancing upon Wasnes-au-Bac. The Germans had dug a series of rifle pits but had abandoned them without offering definite opposition. The fog lifted revealing a wide sweep of open countryside and, in the distance our artillery fire upon a town beyond Wasnes-au-Bac was registering with telling effect. The Battalion moved up to the outskirts of Wasnes-au-Bac to occupy a support position, having encountered little resistance apart from long-range artillery fire. Later in the day, the unit moved into billets in the town.

Meanwhile, the general advance was proceeding and during the afternoon of the following day a great forward drive by the 4th Division on the left and the XXII British Corps on the right squeezed out the 2nd Division just as its vanguard was approaching the city of Denain. Consequently, the 2nd Division was withdrawn from the line for the time being. For the next three days, the 31st Battalion was employed in the rear at the necessary but inglorious task of repairing roads, cleaning up the wreckage left by the retreating Germans, and doing other fatigues of a similar nature.

II.

The advance of the Canadian Corps upon Valenciennes was epic in its swiftness and resolution. During the third day it pushed forward a distance of seven miles along an eight-mile front, occupying the city of Denain and liberating scores of smaller towns and villages. In five days the troops of the Dominion advanced no less than eighteen miles, treading hard on the heels of the retreating Germans and giving them little time to get out their artillery, ammunition and other war supplies.

On the whole the Canadian thrust met with little opposition, and none at all which was not swiftly crushed by the dash and determination of the attacking troops. The 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division, having occupied the remnant of the Drocourt-Queant line which had been still retained by the enemy, were subjected to a series of powerful counter attacks. These were successful for the moment, and drove the Canadian troops from the positions which they had taken. The check was only temporary, however, and within a few hours the Germans had been driven back in their turn with severe losses.

For the rest, until Denain was reached, the principal obstacles to the advance consisted of demolished bridges, mined and cratered roads and the stubborn resistance of a German rear-guard composed, for the most part, of machine-gunners. These rear-guards fought their weapons gallantly, frequently delaying the advancing lines for a sufficient time to enable their comrades in the rear to retire more or less in order. There was little activity on the part of German artillery except for shelling by long-range guns placed well in the rear. The enemy had already lost too many guns to risk the loss of more by employing them in a rear-guard action.

During the entire advance, the Canadian Engineers did splendid work, repairing roads and bridging gaps so speedily that the artillery and immense supply columns were able to keep well up to the infantry.

The enemy endeavored to make a stand at Denain, the most important city between Douai and Valenciennes. Here the Germans had prepared new positions and were holding them in force. They presented a valiant but futile resistance and by the evening

of October 19, the city was in Canadian hands, part of the honor for the occupation going to the 50th Battalion. The enemy works were completely destroyed by artillery and trench-mortar fire, and the men of the 12th Brigade then charged forward with the bayonet and in a very short time, had cleared the town.

One of the most serious problems of the advance was presented by the civilian population of the liberated territory.

The whole area east of Douai is highly industrialized, and the Germans had compelled the Belgian inhabitants to labor for them up to the last minute. Then they had retired, leaving these unfortunate people without food or supplies of any kind. As a result the commissariat of the Canadian Corps had to shoulder the responsibility of feeding the civilian population of every town and village occupied, in addition to providing supplies for the fighting troops. This taxed its resources, and the resources of the transport system to the utmost limit; and it reflects great credit on the organization of the supply services that the emergency was met and dealt with successfully and without any check to the advance.

By the evening of October 21st, the Canadian line was within little more than a mile of the outskirts of Valenciennes. It now became evident that at this point the enemy intended to make his chief stand. Behind the city was massed all the artillery that could be spared, while in front the country had been flooded by the overflow of the Canal de l'Escaut and was practically impassable to troops. North of the city the German flank was protected by the extensive forests of Vicoign and Raismes, which were strongly held by the enemy, although a large part of the former was already in Canadian hands.

At this time the line of the Canadian Corps ran, roughly, from St. Amand on the north to the western outskirts of Trith St. Leger, a village some three miles south-west of Valenciennes. On the right the 4th Division still held its position; but on the left the 1st Division, which had not been out of the line since the heavy fighting at Cambrai, had been relieved by the 3rd Division.

The attack upon the German positions was commenced during the afternoon of October 22nd, and was pressed with vigour, all arms co-operating with a high degree of efficiency. By nightfall the villages of Trith St. Leger, Le Vignoble, La Sentinel, St.

Waast le Haut and Bruay, together with nearly the whole of the forest of Raismes, had been occupied.

The weather was unfavourable for an offensive, continual rains and autumn mists serving to veil the movements of hostile troops, and rendering aerial control of artillery fire difficult or impossible. The mud also interfered with communication and increased the difficulties of the supply columns, while the rising floods in the country west and north-west of Valenciennes impeded the progress of the attacking forces.

Behind the Valenciennes-Le Quesnoy railway the two British corps which were co-operating with the Canadians in the attack had been unable to get forward owing to the difficulty experienced in getting up supplies. It was decided, therefore, that the Canadian battalions should stand fast upon the ground occupied until the British troops were able to get into position. Two days later, units of the XXII Corps, fighting valiantly, managed to cross the canal and capture Famars Ridge. They were unsuccessful, however, in an attempt to storm Mont Houy, a commanding eminence located to the south of the city near the junction of the Scheldt and Rhonelle rivers. By this time the Germans were fighting with desperation, and contesting every yard of the British and Canadian advance with the utmost stubbornness and determination. Valenciennes was the point upon which the enemy retreat, both to the north and south, pivoted, and orders had been issued to hold the position at all costs.

By the end of October the Canadian Corps held the whole of the western bank of the River Scheldt from Conde to Valenciennes. Frontal attack in this area, with the enemy in occupation of Mont Houy, was a practical impossibility. Before the advance could go forward, the high ground in this neighbourhood had to be taken and held.

On October 28th, a British division, after a desperate charge, had gained a footing in the woods on Mont Houy, but had been driven out again by the enemy in a series of heavy and costly counter attacks. It was decided, therefore, that the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions should advance west and north-west of Valenciennes, forcing a way through the inundated areas, while, under cover of the advance, the engineers should throw bridges over the

river leading directly into the city. Under the circumstances, this plan presented immense difficulties, but it afforded the best chance of swift success; and by this time no difficulties were sufficient to daunt the spirits of the men of the Dominion, flushed with victory and rendered confident by past successes.

III.

In the meantime the 31st Battalion had been carrying on with its duties in the rearward areas, unmolested by the enemy. On Wednesday, October 23rd, the unit marched out of Wasnes Au Bac en route for Monchecourt. During the march it was inspected by Brig.-Gen. A. Ross, D.S.O., the 6th Brigade Commander, Brig.-Gen. Bell being still in England recovering from his wound. By noon the Battalion had reached its destination, where the men found comfortable billets awaiting them.

The 31st Battalion remained at Monchecourt until November 4th, the days being spent in training, route marches and sports. On October 29th, in bright and clear weather, the whole unit marched to Villers Au Tertre, where a brigade inspection was held by the Corps Commander, Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. W. Currie. His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, was present at the review, and took the salute on the march past.

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 3rd, news arrived of an immediate forward movement. This was confirmed at 11.30 p.m., when orders were issued for the Battalion to move on the following morning.

By this time events in Europe were marching fast to their inevitable conclusion, and news of the peace overtures of Germany had spread throughout the Allied armies and the countries which they defended. Rumours of an armistice were in the air, and the prospect of imminent victory was sending the fighting forces forward with renewed dash and determination.

Along practically the whole of the Western Front the Germans were in full retreat, abandoning in their haste hundreds of guns, huge supplies of ammunition and vast stores of war material. Thousands and tens of thousands of beaten and demoralized German soldiers were surrendering daily to the advancing troops

of France and Britain, as the disorganized hordes of the enemy were bundled back towards their own borders.

On the Italian Front a sudden offensive on the Trentino and Middle Piave took the enemy by surprise and sent his forces staggering backwards before the determined attack of Italian, French and British battalions. Large numbers of prisoners were taken; and four days later Austria-Hungary capitulated, and agreed to a separate armistice. On November 3rd the armistice was signed, and Germany's southern ally was out of the war.

Two days later, in Berlin, the last meeting of the secretaries of state of the old German regime took place. Those present listened to General Von Gruner's unvarnished and unpalatable report of the situation upon the Western Front. From this it became abundantly clear that nothing but an immediate armistice could save the German armies from complete disaster and the soil of Germany from invasion by hostile forces. As a result of this meeting Erzberger was delegated to approach the French Generalissimo with a view to arranging terms and of bringing the conflict to a conclusion.

IV.

On November 1st the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions renewed the attack upon Valenciennes. By this time the artillery was up in position in full strength, reinforced by a number of additional heavy batteries. Except for the houses along the bank of the canal, which had been converted into strong machine-gun posts, the bombardment spared the city itself, but deluged the German positions outside the city limits with gas and high-explosive shell. Smoke screens were also put down; and as the air was heavy and damp, this cover remained for a considerable time.

In the wake of the devastating artillery barrage the infantry advanced through the smoke screens. Progress was difficult on account of the flooded nature of much of the terrain over which the troops had to move; but the operation was carried out without unduly heavy casualties, the artillery having already effectively smothered the fire of all but a few hostile batteries and wiped out of existence a majority of the numerous machine-gun nests. Isolated posts, which had escaped the barrage, fought on stubbornly until wiped out by bomb and bayonet.



Mont Houy was stormed by men of the 46th and 50th Battalions, and held in spite of three heavy counter attacks by the enemy. The Valenciennes-Maubeuge railway line — the final objective of the attack — was reached on schedule, an important artery in the German communication system being thereby severed. Valenciennes itself was still in enemy hands, but its continued occupation had been rendered impossible.

During the night a footing within the city was secured by elements of the 4th Division, which had passed the canal on bridges hastily thrown across by the Canadian Engineers. The station, with its extensive railway yards, was captured, while patrols proceeded to work their way towards the centre of the city by bitter house-to-house fighting.

Next morning the battle for Valenciennes continued, the enemy fighting bitterly to retain his hold on the city until his main forces, with such supplies and material as could be salvaged, had time to fall back towards Mons. By November 4th, however, the city was in Canadian hands and the following evening the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles entered Vicq. The Battle of Valenciennes had ended in another notable victory for the Canadian Corps and the advance on Mons had commenced.

V.

Meanwhile, the 31st Battalion had recommended its forward march — a march destined to lead them on to their last battle and victory and later to the occupation of German territory.

At 10.00 a.m., on November 4th, the Battalion marched out of Monchecourt and proceeded by way of Marq and Marquette to Denain. Orders were received there to march on to Wavrechain where, at 3.00 p.m. the Battalion went into billets. The Battalion rested there for two days while beyond Valenciennes the 3rd and 4th Brigades pressed on toward Mons. On November 6th the Battalion moved forward to Valenciennes where both officers and men met many old friends in the 50th Battalion — also a Calgary unit. The 31st Battalion officers were entertained by the 50th Battalion messes and the men fraternized, paying little heed to and possibly totally ignorant of events elsewhere which were to bring speedy developments toward peace.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Mons--and the End

I.

Pursuing open warfare tactics and fighting in skirmishes that brought into full play the ingenuity of the individual soldier and the co-operation of the participating units of the Corps, the 4th Canadian Division, on November 5th had already advanced some five miles north-east of Valenciennes along the road to Mons. The country, thickly populated and rich in coal, is dotted with mining villages and numerous tall conical slag heaps or "fosses." Slate black, grimy factories thrusting staggered wings and shanties haphazardly in all directions as if built without heed to design, lift their tall chimneys high above little copses of leafy planted woods and isolated farms, their yards traditionally surrounded by high stone walls frequently a spotless white despite the murky, soot-laden air in which they stand.

Ideal for the use of troops engaged in rear-guard action, this country provided innumerable well concealed locations for hidden machine-gun nests and proved most treacherous for the advancing Canadians. German observation posts atop the slag heaps commanded excellent views of roads and fields through which our troops must pass, yet when their positions became untenable either because of the numbers or energy of our infantry or because of the accuracy of our artillery fire, they were able to withdraw unobserved and frequently had retired for some time before their absence became definitely known. Numerous delaying actions were, therefore, fought, but, despite the unending variety of tactical situations, the troops of the Dominion pressed forward rapidly. One after another in speedy succession, villages, factories, woods and farms which offered resistance were surrounded from the flanks usually with the capture of their small German garrisons, many of which had to be stormed with hand

grenades and the bayonet after artillery fire had demolished their isolated defences.

Elements of the 4th Division captured Quievrechain and bridges over the Aunelle and Honelle rivers on November 6, before the latter could be destroyed by the enemy, so fast was our advance. During that night the 2nd Division relieved the 4th and, from then until the end of the war, the Canadian advance was carried forward by the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Already advanced patrols of the Canadian Corps, crossing the frontier, had entered Belgian territory, and on the following day, November 7, the 5th Brigade captured Elouges, about two miles south of the Valenciennes-Mons road, while, further north, elements of the 3rd Division entered Quievrain across the river from Quievrechain. The villages of Dour and Boussu fell to the Canadians on the early morning of November 8, even while German envoys were passing through the French lines to hear the terms of the armistice from Marshal Foch and members of his Allied staff.

Briefly, the terms of the armistice called for the surrender of 5,000 guns; 30,000 machine guns; 2,000 aeroplanes; 5,000 locomotives; 3,000 minenwerfers; 150,000 wagons; 5,000 motor lorries; 6 battle cruisers; 10 battleships; 8 light cruisers; 50 destroyers; and a number of less important pieces of war equipment. The terms also provided for the occupation of the Rhineland and three important bridgeheads at Cologne, Bonn and Coblenz. The German envoys were given 72 hours in which to accept or reject the terms. Acceptance meant unconditional surrender and complete acknowledgement of defeat, but Germany had no alternative but to accept.

Despite the trickery of tenacious rear-guards, the German armies all along the Western Front were in disorganized and demoralized retreat which, at many points, had become a rout from which it had become impossible to rally for any permanent or decisive stand. German losses in men, guns, munitions and material had become colossal. Except for the natural barrier of the Rhine, she had no defensive line upon which to retire, and there remained no hope or possibility of reorganizing her scattered forces upon a basis strong enough to offer effective resistance to the Allied advance. Germany, at long last, was decisively beaten

in the field, and, regardless of claims she may have made since then, she knew she was defeated.

II.

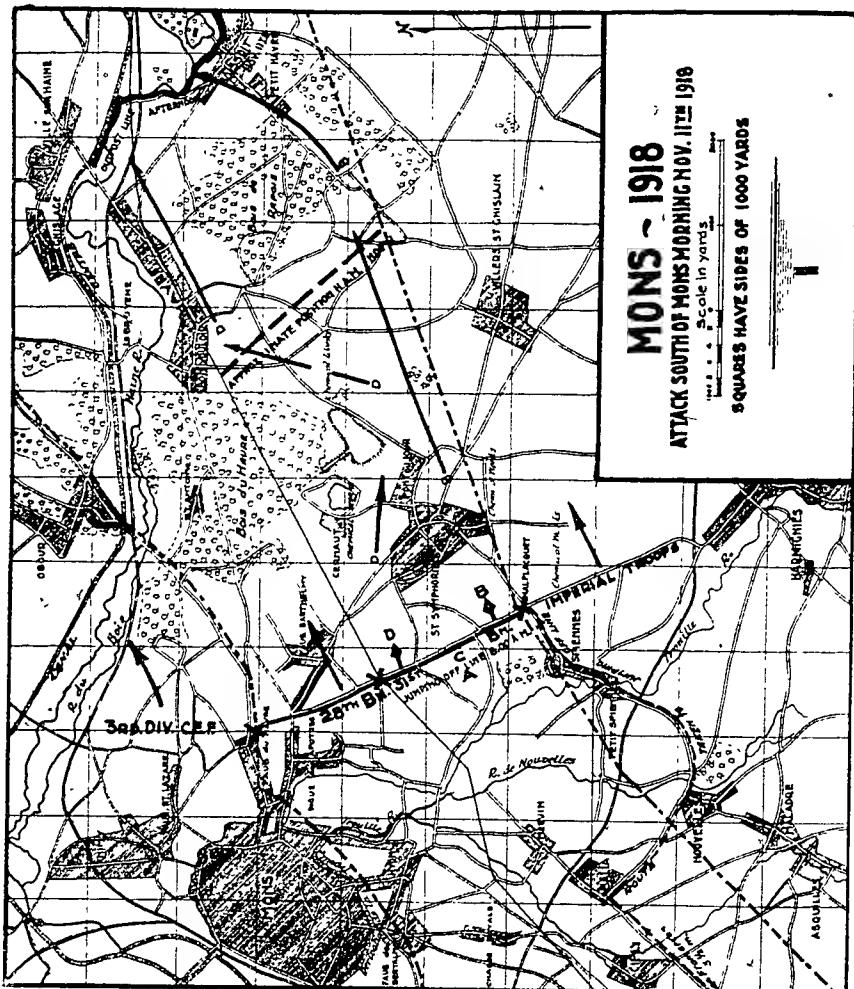
Dull and cloudy after the previous days of rain, the chilly morning of this fateful day for Germany found the 31st Battalion busy packing kit and preparing to leave Valenciennes under orders to move to Quievrain where, at 4.40 o'clock that afternoon, the Battalion took up comfortable billets and awaited further orders.

A short march brought the Battalion to Dour at 10.30 o'clock on the morning of November 9th. The population, wild with joy, poured into the streets laughing, singing and shouting, and broke into the marching ranks to scatter bowls of mixed flour and salt over the heads and shoulders of the officers and men — a strange procedure dating from antiquity when salt and flour were thus used to greet victorious warriors.

Dour, a dirty little village, as are all the mining towns between Quievrain and Frameries, afforded but poor billets despite the cordiality of its citizens, so little reluctance, therefore, marked the departure of the Battalion at 7:30 a.m., November 10, for the forward areas and its final battle.

From Frameries, reached at 11.00 the same morning, the noise of battle could be clearly heard as the 4th Brigade proceeded with the attack on the right of Mons along a little hill about a mile and a half forward and to the right of the town near which in 1914 British troops had first met the German advance. The citizens of Frameries gave the Battalion a cordial reception as the men settled down to await their next movement order which came at midnight.

The 31st moved forward at 3.30 o'clock on the memorable morning of the first Armistice Day to a jumping-off point at Saint Symphorien near the village of Malpaquet which gave its name to one of the Duke of Marlborough's famous battles. The march in the pitch darkness by winding roads and circuitous detours, made necessary by German demolition of bridges and mining of highway intersections, proved difficult but the bright, cool dawn found the Battalion in position on schedule. In the twilight of the approaching day as the men marched the last half of the 11 kilometers from Frameries, they saw along the roadside numerous



crosses erected by the Belgians to mark the resting places of many of the "Old Contemptibles" who had fallen during engagements with the Germans more than four years before — in August, 1914.

Owing to the open nature of the warfare being pursued and the need for ready mobile patrols, and quick support for the infantry from artillery and mortar units, a troop of the Imperial Lancer Regiment, one section of an 18-pounder battery and some Stokes mortars were attached to the 31st Battalion for this attack, which, few, if any, realized would be the last of the war. Although numerous rumors had persisted during the previous day, no definite orders had been given that an armistice was declared for that day.

The cavalry reconnoitred the ground in front of the jumping-off place until contact was established with the enemy, and it was during this part of the action that a trooper of the Lancer Regiment was killed by machine-gun fire from a position in a chemical factory south of Bon Vouloir. A story, believed to have been authentic, circulated to the effect that this trooper had gone into action more than four years previously and had first encountered the enemy near the place where he was killed two hours before the end of the war.

The area ahead of the jumping-off place was defended by isolated German machine-gun positions placed to delay the attack of the 31st Battalion as it worked forward to close quarters with all the vigor of fresh troops eager to keep the enemy on the run. "D" Company pushed on toward Bon Vouloir, driving before it machine-gun crews some of whom deserted their guns and ran away at the approach of the resolute Canadians with levelled bayonets. Thus the attack continued, with steady progress made along the front.

It was not until 10 o'clock that orders were received from Brigade that hostilities would cease at 11 a.m. Meanwhile "B" Company on the right, having worked its way against stiff opposition to a position on high ground to the right of Bois du Rapois, encountered heavy machine-gun fire from a strong nest of German machine guns. The company, having pressed cautiously forward, was in position for the final assault upon this stronghold, when, with dramatic suddenness enemy guns which remained in position fired their final salvos. The lead had been played by Heinie, who,

rather than pack unused ammunition back, had burst forth with everything he had in one last fusilade and our guns gave answer. It was during this action that Lieut. C. McDiarmid and five other ranks were wounded — the last war casualties sustained by "Bell's Bulldogs."

Down behind the knoll along whose ridge the men of "B" Company crouched awaiting the signal to charge, the section of 18-pounders had lain silent for possibly half an hour, but when the German burst of shelling broke around them, our artillerymen leaped to their places and opened fire with several salvos in return.

The shell fire lasted for about five minutes. Then at the stroke of 11, like a roll of heavy thunder, now fading away to be lost in the misty distance, the booming noise of gunfire, the rattle of machine-gun and rifle fire, the shouting of men faded quickly out, and the ear now caught the music of a hundred church bells pealing out from every direction their gratitude for peace after four years of warfare and its horrors.

A German officer stepped from the position which our men, in another moment would have stormed, and fired a white "Very Light." The troops watched him cautiously. He gave an order and from the ground arose the figures of his men. They dismantled their guns, pouring out the water from the jackets. They packed their equipment with deliberate calm as men might lay down their tools when another day's work is done, and, lining up, walked off in the direction of the village of Boissoit.

Our men followed and took up positions on the outskirts of Boissoit toward and along the Canal du Centre, already reached by "C" Company which during the last assault, had gone through Bon Vouloir. Miners who, under German occupation, that morning had descended the mines at Havre, came from the pits in the evening to find themselves liberated and the British troops in possession. The people of the village gave vent to their joy by bringing forth their best wine — hidden for years beneath earthy cellar floors — and mixed with the troops who readily shared with them what remaining food and iron rations their knapsacks could provide.

During the afternoon low dismal clouds began to gather and with them came a steady rain to which none paid heed as the festi-

vities or the duties of the troops went forward. The Germans who had crossed the canal celebrated boisterously by staging a brilliant fireworks display for several hours during which they set off every available flare they could find.

By nightfall the 31st Battalion had established posts from the village of Havre along the Canal du Centre, angling backward along the Le Haine River to Boissoit and for the men who occupied these posts all the diligence of war-time duty prevailed. During the day, the 28th Battalion had moved forward with the 31st, but to the left of the road from Mons to Havre. Further to the left, the 7th Brigade of the 3rd Division had carried its advance forward and on the right the Imperial troops, during the early morning, had connected up with the 31st Battalion.

III.

Meanwhile, elsewhere along the front interesting events had taken place. To Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the first Canadian troops to enter the war, had fallen the honor of being the first unit of the Canadian Corps to enter Mons victoriously. This fine regiment had posted patrols within the city by the night of November 9. Later, the 42nd Battalion and the Royal Canadian Regiment of the 7th Brigade accompanied by the 5th Lancers, formally occupied the city and, passing through, had managed to get some five miles to the east before hostilities ended. Thus the British Lancer Regiment saw the end of the war in the very locality where it had seen its first action.

During the four and a half days immediately before the Armistice, the 2nd Division had advanced 18 miles, at times driving before it fragments of the enemy rear-guard. The weather, for the greater part, had been unfavorable. Demolished bridges and cratered roads had hindered progress and interfered considerably with the supply and transport services, but in spite of these impediments, the advance had been rapid. More than 24 towns and villages had been liberated; the booty captured had been enormous and the number of prisoners could not be counted.

Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Currie, Canadian Corps Commander, thus summarizes the achievements of his troops during the concluding stages of the great struggle:—

"Between October 11th and November 11th, the Canadian Corps had advanced to a total depth exceeding 91,000 yards, through a country in which the enemy had destroyed railways, bridges, and roads, and flooded large areas to further impede our progress.

"To the normal difficulties of moving and supplying a large number of men in a comparatively restricted area was added the necessity of feeding several hundred thousand people, chiefly women and children, left in a starving condition by the enemy. Several deaths by starvation, or through suffering consequent on privation, were experienced in villages and towns which, being kept under hostile shell-fire and defended by machine guns, could not be captured rapidly by our troops.

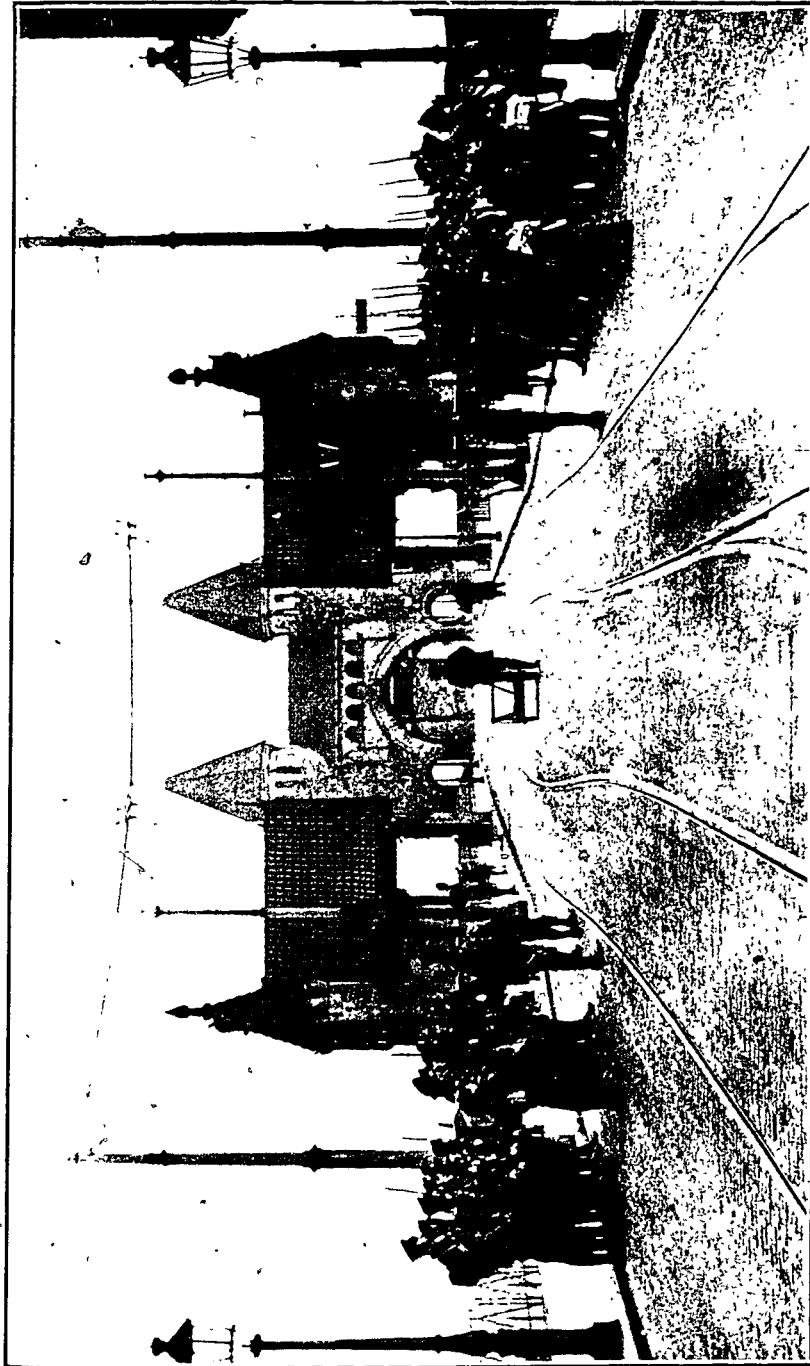
"The fighting was light up to the Canal de l'Escaut, but stiffened perceptibly from there on until the capture of Mons. and added a great deal to the physical exertion caused by such a long advance in adverse weather . . .

"When it is recalled that since August 8th, the Canadian Corps had fought battles of the first magnitude, having a direct bearing on the general situation, and contributing to an extent difficult to realize to the defeat of the German armies in the field, this advance under most difficult conditions constitutes a decisive test of the superior energy and power of endurance of our men.

"It is befitting that the capture of Mons should close the fighting records of the Canadian troops, in which every battle they fought is a resplendent page of glory.

"The Canadian Corps was deeply appreciative of the honour of having been selected amongst the first for the task of establishing and occupying the bridgeheads east of the Rhine. A long march of 170 miles under difficult conditions was ahead of them, but they ungrudgingly looked forward to what had always been their ultimate objective — the occupation of German soil.

"Between August 8th and November 11th, the following had been captured: Prisoners, 31,537; guns (heavy and



Changing the guard, Bonn Bridge. 31st Battalion relieving the 28th Battalion.



field), 623; machine guns, 2,842; trench mortars, (heavy and light), 386.

"Over 500 square miles of territory and 228 cities, towns, and villages had been liberated, including the cities of Cambrai, Denain, Valenciennes, and Mons.

"From August 8th to October 11th, not less than 47 German divisions had been engaged and defeated by the Canadian Corps, that is, nearly a quarter of the total German forces on the western front.

"After October 11th the disorganization of the German troops on our front was such that it was difficult to determine with exactitude the importance of the elements of many divisions engaged.

"In the performance of these mighty achievements all arms of the corps have bent their purposeful energy, working one for all and all for one. The dash and magnificent bravery of our incomparable infantry have at all times been devotedly seconded with great skill and daring by our machine gunners, while the artillery lent them their powerful and never-failing support. The initiative and resourcefulness displayed by the engineers contributed materially to the depth and rapidity of our advances. The devotion of the medical personnel has been, as always, worthy of every praise. The Administrative Services, working at all times under very great pressure and adverse conditions, surpassed their usual efficiency. The Chaplain Services, by their continued devotion to the spiritual welfare of the troops and their utter disregard of personal risk, have endeared themselves to the hearts of everyone. The incessant efforts of the Y.M.C.A. and their initiative in bringing comforts right up to the front line in battle were warmly appreciated by all."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Onward to the Rhine--Then Home Again

I.

Resolutely determined to display no weakness nor to be less diligent in peace than in war in the performance of its duties, the Canadian Corps, despite the unaccustomed atmosphere of security from attack, established a firm line of defence along the front held on Armistice Day. Brigade plans, however, called for the movement of the 31st Battalion from Havre to Boissoit, and this change was carried out on the afternoon of November 12.

The entire day following was devoted to refitting the men with necessary clothing and equipment and making other preparations for the projected march into Germany. While the Battalion remained in Boissoit, many prisoners of war trekked through from German occupied territory. There were Portugese, French, Belgian, Australian, American and Imperial soldiers among them, many of whom had served long terms of imprisonment under hard labor, in most cases in areas immediately behind the firing line. These presented an emaciated, haggard and forlorn appearance as they straggled homeward bewildered by their sudden freedom. The Battalion did everything possible to take care of them. Food and clothing were handed out as liberally as possible. Rations ran short and frequently men of the Battalion had little to eat for themselves, but the plight of many of these returning prisoners was indeed so pitiful that their needs were placed before other immediate considerations. Such was the case, in fact, at frequent times during the march into Germany because all along the way, returning prisoners of war were encountered and to the first British or Canadian troops they met, fell the welcome and brotherly duty of helping them.

Five days were to elapse for the Battalion in Boissoit before the march to the Rhine commenced, and, during this time, on November 15, the 31st Battalion was called upon to supply its

quota of a Guard of Honor for King Albert of Belgium upon the occasion of his formal entry into Mons. This guard comprised a composite company from the units of the 6th Brigade. The memorable occasion was marked with a depth of enthusiasm and rejoicing nearer to tears than to laughter.

II.

It fell to the happy lot of the 31st, two days later on November 17, to form the vanguard of the Canadian Corps on its historic march into Germany, and, being in the van, the Battalion was hailed in every town, village and hamlet as a conquering, victorious army. At Bracquegnies, the destination of the first day's march, the unit was given a civic welcome by inhabitants from a wide surrounding district. Flowers were presented to Lt.-Col. Nelson-Spencer, the officer commanding, and an address of gratitude was read by the Burgomaster in behalf of the civilian population.

Again the next day a similar reception was given at La Louviere with humorous results. The town band turned out with their instruments and, during the march past, persisted in playing the Brabanconne at such a rate that the men had difficulty in keeping step and the dignity of the occasion was severely threatened. At Trivieres, the officers signed their names in the "Book of Gold." It was stated that here the British troops first encountered advanced elements of the German army in 1914 and sustained their first casualties. It was stated that the first British soldiers wounded had fallen in the garden of the village doctor who gave them medical attention. The Burgomaster of Trivieres gave a civic reception which was attended by all the officers of the Battalion.

Indeed, the entire march through Belgium, until the German border was reached, took the form of a triumphal procession, the Canadian troops being welcomed everywhere with sincere and sometimes boisterous expressions of gratitude and joy. Crossing the frontier made history because thus, for the first time, troops of an overseas Dominion of the British Empire entered, as conquerors, the territory of a European nation. The conspicuous position given the Canadian Corps in the general movement of the Allied forces to the German border was a fitting tribute to the out-

standing part the Corps had played in rendering such a movement possible.

The march itself was long and tedious for the men heavily laden with their equipment. Strict march discipline was observed throughout and many of the stages were so long as to tax to the limit the strength of even war-hardened veterans. Frequently adverse weather conditions added to the hardship of the moving columns, the men often being drenched to the skin before reaching their billets at the end of the day's march. Mud encountered at many places along the route made progress exceedingly difficult.

To add to the numerous hardships at hand, rations often ran short because of the difficulty of getting them through the back areas of France and Belgium where the retiring Germans had demolished railways, highways and bridges. Boots began to deteriorate and could not be readily replaced. Socks wore out and many of the men marched on blistered feet, but few, if any, left their place in the ranks.

Hard though the marching was, it was none the less heartening. Everywhere, the troops were received with an enthusiasm and a depth of gratitude which could be rendered only by a liberated people who had spent long years in bondage under a ruthless and tyrannical conqueror. To the simple folk of the towns and villages through which they passed, the Canadians were heroes — a somewhat novel experience.

Before the Allied Armies, as they marched toward Germany, the field-gray battalions of the Fatherland were trudging homeward. For the greater part they appeared to have marched in an orderly manner and with good discipline, but there were exceptions. Some of the German regiments were torn by revolution and had already rid themselves of their officers, in many instances, by the most direct and drastic methods. It was probably to units such as these that the occasional cases of lootings, and other deeds of ill répute were attributable. In justice it must be said, however, that such cases were comparatively rare and that, on the whole, the withdrawal of the German troops was much more to their credit than their advance had been four years earlier.

As the Germans retired, they left behind huge parks of guns, munitions and other war equipment often assembled in or near

small villages in accordance with the terms of the Armistice. At Nameche on the Meuse, they left miles upon miles of barges laden with materials and provisions. The advancing Canadians located on some of the barges, large supplies of wine, of which, in the spirit of fun, they partook liberally with gleeful results, but it was to their credit that they kept their rejoicing well in hand and were ready and in order to continue their march to the Rhineland the following morning.

In addition to the large quantities of war materials and supplies left by order of the German High Command, the Canadians found along the roadways scattered equipment, helmets, army clothing, rifles and fighting gear discarded by the German soldiery. Abandoned wagons, carts, field kitchens and other camp utensils frequently lined the roads — the wreckage of the greatest fighting machine the world, until that time, had ever known.

III.

The 31st Battalion, in the vanguard of the Sixth Brigade, left Trivieres and marched to Gosselies on November 21, and on the following day continued to Jumet where a particularly warm welcome was in store for the unit.

As the head of the column approached the village it was met by the Burgomaster and the village fathers, accompanied by a band consisting of half a dozen men playing with hearty good will but little harmony on flutes, fifes and a solitary but strident trumpet. This band played the men triumphantly into the village where the inhabitants swarmed, cheering through the street as the column made its way toward the town hall. Here the officers of the battalion were given an official welcome while the men fell out and proceeded to their billets.

Within the village hall, two long tables had been set up and loaded with wines, but of food, significantly, there was little, and, after their long march, everyone was hungry. Many long speeches followed, and many toasts all duly and deeply honored by the hungry but appreciative gentlemen from Canada. Throughout the proceedings, no food made its appearance, but when the guests of the Burgomaster reached their billets they found that their hospitable hostesses had prepared sumptuous meals to which justice was done. *Porquoi?* "C'est apres le guerre fini."



Despite the thorough nature of this memorable reception, however, it was not forgotten that the 31st Battalion, leading the Brigade, must take over outpost duty. The area was, accordingly, reconnoitred and a system of outposts established east of the village.

Still forming the advance guard of the Brigade, the Alberta Battalion proceeded from Jumet to Velaine on November 24, and on the following day moved on to Temploux — a long and trying march over wet and slippery roads. As the Battalion passed through Namur, the First Army Commander, General Sir H. Plumer, G.C.B., took the salute.

At Temploux the men rested on November 26 and were visited by the Brigade Commander. He addressed them briefly, emphasizing the need for good conduct and soldierly discipline during the march into Germany. He gave an emphatic warning against fraternizing with the Germans whether of civilian or military rank.

In a pouring rain, on November 27, the 31st Battalion marched from Temploux to Nameche on the river Meuse. Jeneffe was reached on the following day, after a march of nearly sixteen miles over muddy, slippery roads. Then, following a night's rest, the march was resumed the next morning to bring the Battalion to Heyd — another stage of sixteen miles — late that afternoon. The men enjoyed a brief, much-needed rest on the morning of November 30; but, in the afternoon, the march was resumed and the Battalion arrived at Ottre, a distance of seventeen miles in five hours, without a man falling out.

By such strenuous marching, the Battalion, still the vanguard, rapidly approached the German frontier whose rugged hills densely forested with pines and other evergreens seemed not unlike those of Alberta's foothill country. Another significant change was noted. The town of Beho, only a mile from the German border, was reached at 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon of December 1, and here the inhabitants were very pro-German and hostile. Until this time, welcomes of various degrees of warmth had greeted the Canadians, but now a definite change in sentiment was noticed.

It was significant that, upon their return to the Rhineland, the retiring Germans were welcomed everywhere as victors. They deserved these tributes because, apart from certain deplorable ex-

ceptions, they had proven themselves brave and gallant soldiers. They did not, however, merit the tribute which German history has endeavored to foist upon them, namely, that they were an unbeaten army.

From the town of Beho, "A" Company of the 31st Battalion was sent forward to Maldingen, inside the German frontier, where it took up a position for the night and formed the outpost line on the Battalion front. This gave the 31st Battalion the honor of being the first Canadian infantry unit to enter German territory — a distinction of which the Alberta Battalion was justly proud.

While the Battalion was quartered in Beho, Lt.-Col. Nelson-Spencer proceeded on leave to England, and Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., resumed command of his old unit in time to lead it into Germany.

By this time the Battalion had far out-distanced its transport, which was following on behind with the rations. For some time the men had been marching, for the most part, with tightened belts and little food so, at Beho, it became apparent that something substantial in the way of food would have to be procured for them. After considerable difficulty, Lt.-Col. Nelson-Spencer purchased a large cow for a larger price (2,000 francs). It was not so young as it had been, and it must have led a hard life, but, it is recorded in the annals that it made good and nourishing soup despite the somewhat drastic after effects of eating the green meat.

For two days the Battalion remained at Beho training, cleaning equipment and preparing for the march into Germany. Then, on December 4, the men from Alberta moved out, and, with the unfurled King's colours, which was carried from then on until Bonn was reached, they crossed the frontier and arrived at Krombach, five miles beyond, where billets were found for the night.

IV.

In the chill dawn of the following late autumnal day, the 31st Battalion was off on the march again, and, marching sixteen miles, entered Manderfield. The next halt, Blankenheim, 21 miles further east, was reached at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of December 6. The Battalion was now passing through heavily forested country noted principally for its wild boar hunting. The march-

ing was very difficult because much of the route lay through terrain similar to that of the French and Belgian Ardennes. In fact, nowhere on the march from Namur to Endenich did the country, except for small portions of the journey, present other than a series of steep hills and narrow valleys.

At the head of the Sixth Brigade column, the 31st Battalion marched another fourteen miles and reached Arloff on December 7. By this time the men's footwear was in bad condition, and a number of them were suffering from blistered feet, but during these marches of fully thirty-five miles in two days not a man fell out.

A day of rest had been expected at Arloff, but at one o'clock in the afternoon of December 8 orders were received to march to Weidesheim, the men's packs for the first time being transported by lorries. At Weidesheim a special sub-section of the Battalion was organized to include all members able to speak German. The duty of this sub-section was to report on the attitude of the German public toward the troops and to watch for suspicious characters who might endeavor to mingle with the men.

Preparations were made for a five-day rest at Weidesheim in order that the men might clean equipment, repair footwear and renovate uniforms, but at 8.30 o'clock on the morning of December 10th marching orders were received. The Battalion reached Bonn early that afternoon and moved into billets in the adjoining suburbs of Poppelsdorf and Endenich — the former noted for its beautiful gardens; the latter for its quaint plaster buildings, narrow, cobblestoned streets and rickety tram cars. Here the men rested for two days prior to their march across the Rhine.

The memorable morning of Friday, December 13, dawned with a pouring rain despite which, the 2nd Canadian Division, an array of soldiery and equipment eighteen miles long in column of route, marched down Poppelsdorffplatz, past the historic Bonn University within sight of the towering white statue of Bismarck and over the Rhine to take up quarters in the area of Beuel and the bridgehead area forward.

The Corps Commander, Sir Arthur W. Currie, reviewed the Division from his saluting base on the bridge, the Prince of Wales at his side. Wearing their steel helmets, with bayonets fixed and

the Union Jack flying; with bands playing and heedless of the rain, the men of the 31st Battalion and all the other units of the Division made an excellent showing and created a lasting impression upon the German population thousands of whom lined the streets along which the marching troops passed. In full marching order, the men wore no greatcoats. The rain poured from their helmets about their shoulders and drenched them to the skin, but in Beuel good, though scattered, billets were found and the men, proceeding to get thoroughly dried out, settled down to their new routine. "A" and "B" Companies took up positions along the semi-circular line of outposts guarding the Bonn bridgehead, while the other two companies remained in billets at Beuel. The Battalion's outpost line extended along the right of the Bridgehead to a point beyond Vinxel. Part of the line continued through an estate owned by the Kaiser and used by him as a game preserve. The picturesque town of Konigswinter lay nearby up the river, and, on high ground in the neutral area stood the ancient ruins of the castle of the Drachenfels.

The Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, G.C.B., crossed the Rhine from Beuel to Bonn at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Monday, December 16, and troops of the 28th and 31st Battalions, in walking-out dress, lined the route along which the Field Marshal's car moved slowly as he spoke to men here and there along the line.

Subsequent days passed quietly in the routine of drill, training and periods of duty in the outpost line, and were occasionally varied by sight-seeing trips to Cologne and other places of interest in the neighborhood. Entertainment was also afforded by speakers who delivered appropriate lectures on interesting subjects or by entertainers who presented concerts.

At Christmas and New Year's all the festivities of the season were observed. In many units considerable canteen and mess funds had accumulated despite efforts always to meet expenses only. With these funds, in many cases, special repasts were provided. Purchasers visited the countryside buying large geese, turkeys, sucking pigs, roasts of beef and quantities of wine and and when these supplies ran short, the Y.M.C.A. and Corps canteens brought in supplies of Christmas turkeys which were quickly distributed so that none had to go without.

During this time, of course, the Canadians mingled considerably with the German population and the attitude of the men, particularly toward the children, was friendly. Many a piece of soap or bar of chocolate — two badly needed articles — were handed out. The Rhineland folk, who regarded the Canadians as guardians of law and order, were found to be a friendly, happy people, lovers of music and pleasant to meet. To uniformed Canadians in trams, trains, stores and cafes they always offered a preference. Practically no friction occurred during the stay of the Canadians on the Rhine, but any slight trouble was caused by the Prussian type of officer or soldier who had been demobilized or to some officious civilian authority.

The entire Battalion embarked on a large pleasure steamer on the morning of January 17 and went up the quiet river, moving between high hills covered with vineyards, to Coblenz. Although the rain detracted from the beauty of the trip, it failed to dampen the spirits of the men who thoroughly enjoyed the diversion afforded by the outing.

Three days later, on January 20, orders were received to prepare for the movement of the Battalion back into Belgium. By January 23 all had been made ready, and, throughout the day, the men stood by, awaiting orders to entrain. It was after 4 o'clock in the afternoon, however, before the train puffed out of Beuel station for Namur, reached at 12.30 a.m. the following morning. The 31st Battalion had spent just under eight weeks on German soil.

Detraining at Namur, the 31st Battalion marched to billets in Malonne, and, on January 27, with the exception of "A" Company, the unit moved out to relieve the 1st Dorsets and a company of the 5/6th Royal Scots guarding a number of barges on the River Meuse and on the Sambre Canal. On the following day "A" Company relieved a guard of the 66th British Division on guard duty in Namur. At the end of a week, the 31st moved back into billets at Malonne, having been relieved of guard duty by the 28th Battalion.

During the entire month of February, the men of the 31st Battalion enjoyed a period of training, bathing, shooting on the ranges at Namur, lectures, concerts, football and other sports and an occasional trip to Brussels. Then, on Monday, March 3, the

2nd Canadian Division took part in a gala sports meeting in the Citadel grounds at Namur. On this occasion the 31st Battalion added to its long list of athletic achievements by winning the football championship of the Division. The Battalion marched to Belgrade on March 12 for an inspection of the 6th Brigade by General Sir H. S. Rawlinson, Officer Commanding the Fourth Army. Three days later, in justification of their distinction of being Divisional Champions, the 31st Battalion football team met and defeated, by four goals to nil, a team picked from the units of the 66th British Division.

Toward the end of March the Battalion whose fortunes it has been the purpose of this work to record, commenced to lose something of its individual identity. Preparations were under way for the return of the Canadian Corps to its own shores and for the demobilization of the men who had served their country with such distinction.

Under these plans, the men in the various units of the Corps were called upon to join those units which were scheduled for demobilization in their own home localities. Consequently, on March 26 some 250 men of the 31st Battalion who wished to be demobilized elsewhere than in Alberta, left to join other formations. These men were replaced by a similar number of members of other battalions who wished to be demobilized in Calgary. To this extent, "Bell's Bulldogs" became a composite battalion — but only for the purpose of demobilization.

The last clothing parade was conducted on March 31, 1919, in order to equip the men with new uniforms for their return to Canada; and on that date, also the war diary closes. It is signed by Major W. Jewitt, Acting Officer Commanding, during the absence of Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty who was on duty in England. The effective strength of the Battalion on that date was 31 officers and 546 other ranks.

V.

An impressive and suitable farewell to Belgium still remained, however, before the 31st Battalion was to leave the fields of Flanders. Early in April, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Hewgill, D.S.O., who had been Second-in-Command of the Battalion during the first half

of its existence, arrived in Malonne from England. He brought with him the colors of his old unit. In front of the Namur Cathedral, on April 6, these colors were consecrated and presented to the Battalion. Major-General H. E. Burstall was among the many notable officers present.

On the following day, while the bugles of the 13th Belgian Regiment of the Line called its troops to take over the posts being vacated by the Canadians, the 28th and 31st Battalions left Namur on their return to England. Arriving at Le Havre at 7 o'clock on the morning of April 9, the 31st Battalion detrained, and, after a pause of two days, embarked on a paddle steamer for Southampton. As the sun went down on the evening of April 11, the shores of France faded into the misty distance, marking the end of the Great Adventure commenced by the unit on foreign soil three years and seven months before.

Arriving in Southampton at 7 o'clock on the morning of April 12, the Battalion immediately entrained for Witley Camp in Surrey. With considerable leisure, but with the usual attention to ordinary duties and periods of light physical training to keep the men in physical trim, a stay of more than a month was made at Witley for physical examinations, final leave and the allocation of a transport to carry it over the Atlantic. With mixed feelings of joy at the prospect of going home and reluctance at leaving England, the men, in the early hours of May 19, entrained for Liverpool where the steamship "Cedric" awaited them. With sirens blowing and farewells from many friends who had come to see them off, the members of the Battalion embarked at 4 p.m.

On board was "Heinie," the Russian pony, which had been the regimental mascot ever since its capture at Rosieres — smuggled aboard at Le Havre despite the protests of immigration officials, and now, after its wanderings with the Battalion on the Continent, on its way back to Canada.

The "Cedric" docked at Halifax on May 27, at 10 a.m., and at 3 o'clock that afternoon the 31st Battalion entrained for their journey across Canada. Five days later, on June 1, the Battalion reached Calgary after a journey along which they had met demonstrative receptions at nearly every station passed during the daytime. Everywhere, word of the arrival of the troop train brought out large crowds to cheer the returning veterans.

An enthusiastic welcome awaited them in Calgary, the depot and all the streets leading thence to the Armories being lined by citizens, among whom were many former members of the Battalion, who, having been wounded, had returned home. With these former members many a reunion with marching members of the Battalion took place — now a memory, not in some lugubrious, meaningless way, but with that true spirit of cameraderie which prevailed throughout those three years and seven months in France. This memory and those of other days were to be kept alive in time of peace by the organization of the 31st Battalion Association, whose efforts have helped to preserve in a large measure that spirit of comradeship, and been responsible for the publication of this history.

Arrived at the Armories on that June 1, the work of demobilization was accomplished, and before nightfall the 31st Battalion had ceased to exist.

The Regimental Colors of the Battalion were deposited in the Pro-Cathedral of the Redeemer on July 19, 1919, when they were received by Rt. Rev. Cyprian Pinkham, Anglican Bishop of Calgary, whose son, Lieut. E. F. Pinkham, late of the 31st Battalion, had been killed during the fighting on the Somme on September 15, 1916. Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., commanded the ceremonial parade, and the color party consisted of Lieut. W. K. Jull, Lieut. W. C. West, Sergt. G. Harvey, and two other members of the Battalion. In 1930, the colors were removed temporarily in order that the battle honors of the unit might be emblazoned thereon: Ypres, 1917; Passchendaele; Amiens; Cambrai, 1918; Mount Sorrel; Somme, 1916-18; Flers Courcellette; Vimy, 1917, and Hill 70. The colors were returned to the Pro-Cathedral on November 18, 1930, and there they still (December, 1938) repose. "Heinie," the Battalion mascot, was entrusted to the care of the authorities in the Banff National Park, and there he spent the remainder of his days in restful peace.

So ends the story of the 31st Battalion, Alberta Regiment. As a fighting unit, it was second to none, its reputation it owes to its members and the personality of one great soldier — its commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. (now Major-General) A. H. Bell. Throughout the war and all the changes in personnel, that spirit of its first

commander lived on and it survives today in the Battalion Association. One has only to attend the annual reunions of the old comrades of the "Thirty-First" to feel that comradery, good-fellowship and pride which was the inspiration of all ranks during the hard and bitter days of a war which caused death and suffering to many of its members.

This history, the compilation of which occupied the better part of ten years, and to which several writers have contributed, goes to the press as the Battalion Association, on November 11th, 1938, observes the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, and on November 12, celebrates its 20th annual reunion with a church parade to follow on Sunday, November 13.

It delineates, all too poorly, the adventures and achievements of men indescribably bound together by bonds of understanding incomprehensible to those who have not shared with them their joys and sorrows, their travails and hardships. It is dedicated to the memory of those of "Bell's Bulldogs" who sleep "over there;" and the memories of those men who, having learned the lesson of true brotherhood and passed through the dangers, the pain and futility of such a war, still lift their heads and stand erect with lusty voices to sing in a changing world their undying anthem:

GOD SAVE THE KING.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

447

31st BATTALION, C.E.F.
Commanding Officers and Adjutants of the Battalion.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lt.-Col. A. H. Bell, C.M.G., D.S.O.,
 French Croix de Guerre 7-11-14 to 13-4-18
 Lt.-Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O. 14-4-10 to 5-10-18
 2-12-18 to demobilization
 Lt.-Col. Nelson Spencer, D.S.O. 6-10-18 to 1-12-18

ADJUTANTS

*Lt.-Col. (Capt.) A. E. Myatt, O.B.E.... 22-12-14 to 20-1-16
 *Major (Capt.) W. F. Seaton, M.C. 21-1-16 to 31-6-16
 *Major (A/Major) C. B. Hornby, M.C. 1-7-16 to 28-12-17
 *Capt. (Capt.) H. N. Petty, M.C. 29-12-17 to 14-5-18
 (acting 15-8-17 to 28-12-17)
 *Capt. (Capt.) G. S. Robertson, M.C. 15-5-18 to 15-12-18
 *Capt. (Capt.) W. M. Harris, M.C. 16-12-18 to demobilization
 * Final rank C.E.F.
 () Rank whilst holding appointment of Adjutant.

TOTAL DECORATIONS AND AWARDS, 31st BATTALION,
C.E.F., 1914-1919.

C.M.G.	1
O.B.E.	3
M.B.E.	1
D.S.O.	6
Bar to D.S.O.	1
M.C.	47
Bar to M.C.	5
D.C.M.	29
M.M.	223
Bar to M.M.	13
M.S.M.	8
Mentioned in Despatches	36
French Croix de Guerre	1
French Medaille Militaire	1
French Medaille d'Honneur avec Glaives (en Argent)	1
Belgian Croix de Guerre	6
Belgian Decoration Militaire	1
Russian Cross of St. George	.2
Total.	<u>385</u>

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

31st BATTALION, C.E.F.

1. Total number passed through unit from date left Canada to disbandment of unit	4,487
2. Reinforcements by years:	
1915	125
1916	1,524
1917	1,164
1918	1,187
Total reinforcements from date left Canada	4,000
3. Total individuals	2,713
4. Fatal casualties:	
Killed in action and missing, presumed dead	708
Died of wounds (less P. of W.)	195
Died whilst Prisoner of War (includes wounds)	6
Died of disease	24
Accidental deaths	7
Other deaths	1
Total fatal casualties	941
5. Non-fatal battle casualties	
Non-fatal wounds, enemy fire	2,103
Non-fatal gas, enemy fire	209
Total non-fatal battle casualties	2,312

RESULTS OF BRIGADE ELIMINATION CONTEST FOR
THE CORPS RIFLE MEETING.

SEPT. 9th, 1917.

COMPETITION No. 8—BATTALION CUP.

	Points		Points
1st—31st Canadian Battalion	292	3rd—27th Canadian Battalion	152
2nd—28th " "	204	4th—29th " "	124

COMPETITION No. 9—COMPANY CUP.

	Points		Points
1st—31st Canadian Battalion	462	3rd—27th Canadian Battalion	339
2nd—29th " "	390	4th—28th " "	305

COMPETITION No. 10—PLATOON CUP.

	Points		Points
1st—31st Canadian Battalion	223	3rd—28th Canadian Battalion	145
2nd—29th " "	166	4th—2nd Canadian Pioneers	25

FALLING PLATES COMPETITION.

1st—31st Canadian Battalion	2nd—28th Canadian Battalion
-----------------------------	-----------------------------

**BRIGADE ELIMINATION CONTEST,
SEPT. 9th, 1917.**

COMPETITION No. 8—BATTALION CUP.

Lieut. R. Downie

160029	Sergt. W. Stewart, D. Coy.	231249	Pte. G. J. Morrison, B. Coy.
696083	Pte. F. McCauley, B. Coy.	231161	Pte. E. J. Batson, A. Coy.
184247	Pte. E. R. Pickering, D. Coy.	231218	Pte. R. O. Hanson, C. Coy.

COMPETITION No. 9—COMPANY CUP.

Lieut. L. A. Wildman, B. Coy.

183027	Cpl. W. M. Gilbert, B. Coy.	811619	Pte. P. Logan, B. Coy.
696083	Pte. F. McCauley, B. Coy.	696978	Pte. M. B. McColl, B. Coy.
883129	Pte. G. J. Morrison, B. Coy.	79980	Pte. P. Smith, B. Coy.
79524	Pte. L. F. Gayton, B. Coy.		

COMPETITION No. 10—PLATOON CUP.

C. Coy. No. 2 Platoon.

Lieut. M. E. Patterson

80257	Sergt. J. A. Irvine	79108	A/Cpl. G. G. Mounsey
79240	A/Cpl. F. M. Bent	463353	L./C. J. Ross
183209	A/L.C. D. Weedon	696646	Pte. C. E. Johnson
231377	Pte. E. G. Elliot	231087	Pte. T. W. Nelson
231393	Pte. R. R. Couper	231582	Pte. J. L. Crawford
231145	Pte. W. H. Ferris	231079	Pte. A. Gander
231506	Pte. G. R. Webster	231873	Pte. E. B. Atkins
231290	Pte. A. Davidson	231259	Pte. A. Greenway
231249	Pte. S. L. Davies	231166	Pte. F. G. Dunbar
231428	Pte. W. J. Duncan	231811	Pte. J. E. Duncan
231155	Pte. H. H. Morrow	231203	Pte. J. S. Bentley
231332	Pte. H. A. Fulcher	231122	Pte. J. H. Fuller
183628	Pte. F. C. McDonald	231054	Pte. D. N. McKenzie
231248	Pte. R. O. Hanson	231179	Pte. R. Lynns

FALLING PLATES COMPETITION.

D. Coy. No. 15 Platoon.

160029	Sergt. W. Stewart	696590	Pte. E. Short
736290	Pte. J. M. Chisholm	808255	Pte. A. E. Eccles
184247	Pte. E. R. Pickering	134709	Pte. H. J. Anderson
231316	Pte. C. T. Low		



**DIVISIONAL SPORTS AT VILLERS AU BOIS,
SEPT. 22nd, 1917**

100 yards, second heat	1st.....	231267	Pte. S. W. Miller
880 yards	2nd.....	231189	Pte. W. Kinsella
220 yards, second heat	1st.....	231267	Pte. S. W. Miller
440 yards, 1st heat	1st.....	231267	Pte. S. W. Miller
440 yards, second heat	1st	2nd	Lieut. J. A. Cameron

1 Mile Relay Race, 1st, 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, represented by the 31st Canadian Battalion team, consisting of 2nd Lieut. J. A. Cameron, Pte. W. Kinsella, Pte. J. S. Bentley, and Pte. S. M. Begley.

**CANADIAN CORPS RIFLE MEETING MATCH No. 10
RESULTS OF PLATOON COMPETITION,
SEPT. 21st, 1917.**

Unit	Points	Position
31st Battalion	624	1st
50th Battalion	452	2nd
72nd Battalion	371	3rd
Royal Canadian Regt.	338	4th
75th Battalion	337	5th
49th Battalion	300	6th
1st Battalion	300	7th
29th Battalion	250	8th
19th Battalion	185	9th
14th Battalion	83	10th
5th Battalion	73	11th
116th Battalion	513	Disqualified Lewis Gun firing on Infantry Targets.

CANADIAN CORPS RIFLE MEETING MATCH No. 10.
 MARKING FOR PLATOON COMPETITION,
 SEPT. 21st, 1917.

11th PLATOON 31st CAN. BATT. LIEUT. M. E. PATTERSON, PL. COM.

	Marks x 5 x
A. 1. Turn out	48
2. Method adopted in bringing up platoon	10
3. Method of giving instructions through Section Com.	10
4. Employment of rapid fire	5
5. Fire Orders and description of targets	5
6. Good loading and handling of rifle, really rapid fire when ordered ..	10
 A. LEWIS GUN WORK.	
1. Suitable positions taken up	10
2. Advantage taken of target whenever it appears	15
3. Correct allocation of duties to members of team and ammunition supply	10
4. Use of Cover	10
5. Fire Orders	0
 C. JUDGING ADVANCE.	
1. Fire orders	0
2. Use of cover	0
3. Fire to cover movement	20
4. Position of Platoon Com. and Section Com.	10
Total.....	163
Divided by 5	32
 D. HITS ON TARGET.	
Rifle	411
Lewis Gun	181
	592
Grand Total	624

x. To facilitate marking, the maximum was multiplied by 5, the total being afterwards divided by 5.

APPENDIX

FINAL ORDER ARMISTICE DAY

November 11th, 1918.

TO ALL CONCERNED:

Sender's Number 7, the 11th day of the month, 1918.
The following from Brigade:—

Hostilities will cease at eleven hours (11 hours), and troops will stand fast on line reached at that hour, which will be reported to Brigade Headquarters immediately.

Defence preparation will be maintained and there will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy.

The G. O. C. directs that our troops will push forward with all possible speed, so that the furthermost line may be reached before 11 hours.

Sufficient accommodation should be obtained by you for the whole Brigade.

LIEUT. A. S. VAN DUSEN,
Assisting Adjutant.

NOMINAL ROLL OF OFFICERS, WARRANT OFFICERS,
 NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
 31ST BATTALION, CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

LEGEND

- + Killed in Action.
- ✖ Died of Wounds.
- ◻ Missing, Presumed Dead.
- ÷ Died of Disease.
- O Wounded.
- ✗ Prisoner of War.

AWARDS

- V.C.—Victoria Cross.
- D.S.O.—Distinguished Service Order.
- M.C.—Military Cross.
- C.M.G.—Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.
- M. in D.—Mentioned in Dispatches.
- O.B.E.—Order of the British Empire.
- M.B.E.—Member of the British Empire.
- D.C.M.—Distinguished Conduct Medal.
- M.M.—Military Medal.
- Belg. C. de G.—Belgian Croix de Guerre.
- Belg. Dec. Mil.—Belgian Decoration Militaire.
- M.S.M.—Meritorious Service Medal.
- Med. Mil.—Medaille Militaire.
- Russ. Cr. St. G.—Russian Cross of St. George.
- Fr. Med. d'hon. avec glaives (en Argent)—French Medaille d'honneur avec glaives (en Argent).

OFFICERS

NUMBER.	RANK IN UNIT.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79034	Lt.	Ahern, E. G.		
79359	Lt.	Anderson, J. M.	+	
80079	Lt.	Appleby, N.	+	M.M. and bar
	Lt.	Arbuckle, John Farabee	+	
	Capt.	Ashburner, E.	O	
79454	Lt.	Bailey, Edgar Ernest E.	O	
696296	Lt.	Baker, H. A.	+	
	Lt.	Banhan, W. T.	O	M.C.
79166	Lt.	Bannard, A. W.	O	X M.M.
	Lt.	Barnes, R. H.	+	
108082	Lt.	Barnes, Wilfred R.	+	M.C.
79615	Lt.	Bateman, Chas. Arthur	+	
	Lt.	Beaumont, H. C. C.	O	M.C.
	Lt.-Col	Bell, Arthur Henry	O	D.S.O., C.M.G., M. in D. (6), Fr. C de G.
696125	Lt.	Benn, W. A.	O	
	Capt.	Blair, Alfred	O	
79173	Capt.	Blake, G.		M. in D.
	Lt.	Booth, Alex. Chas. Taylor		
	Lt.	Boucher, Edgar Allen	+	
	Lt.	Bradburn, W. C.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	RANK IN UNIT.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
183892	Lt.	Bradley, W. N.	O	M.C.
80109	Lt.	Brett, E. S.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	Brown, H. P. R.		
446003	Lt.	Brown, Robert	O	
79347	Lt.	Bryan, W. C.		
	Lt.	Buchanan, R. W.	+	
79241	Lt.	Burrell, G. E.		
	Lt.	Cadham, J. G.		
79821	Lt.	Calvert, R.	O	M.M.
	Lt.	Cameron, J. A.	+	D.S.O., M. in D.
79908	Lt.	Campbell, D. J. M.	+	
79045	Lt.	Carson, J. C. M.		
	Lt.	Carson, J. H.	■	M.C.
79234	Lt.	Carter, H. B.		
	Lt.	Carter, Ralph Barr		
	Lt.	Carter, R. S.		
	Lt.	Carty, W. J.		
	Lt.	Clarke, S. J.		
79023	Lt.	Clement, J. F.	O	M.M.
79567	Lt.	Conrad, E. S.	+	
624730	Lt.	Copeland, J. B.	O	
	Lt.	Cunliffe, G. A.	+	
80015	Lt.	Curtis, W. B.		M.M. and bar, M.C., M. in D.
	Major	Daly, Patrick Joseph, D.S.O.		
	Lt.	Davies, R. D.		
	Capt.	Davis, A.		
	Capt.	Darley, R. B.		
	Major	Dawson, Lewis Henry		
	Lt.	Dickie, J. W. V.		
	Lt.-Col.	Doughty, Edward Spencer	O	D.S.O. and bar, M. in D.
79457	Lt.	Downie, R.	O	
79069	Capt.	Eccles, Vernon J. L.	+	
79322	Lt.	Edgar, R. O.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	Ecland, R. G. W.	+	
	Lt.	Emmery, Wm. Ernest		
79027	Lt.	Ferrie, R.		
	Lt.	Finn, E. A.	+	
79078	Lt.	Forbes, D. B.	+	
	Capt.	Forbes, H. B.	O	M. in D.
79339	Lt.	Forbes, R. J.	-O	
80025	Lt.	Forster, Wm. B.	O	
79074	Lt.	Foster, A. D.	O	
	Lt.	Franks, Norman		M.C.
79225	Lt.	French, W. H.	O	M.C.
424804	Lt.	Freudemacher, A. H.	O	
434102	Lt.	Friend, W. D.	O	
183002	Lt.	Gainor, J. H.	O	M.C.
183027	Lt.	Gilbert, W. McC.	O	M.M. and M.C.
	Major	Gilker, J. S.	+	
	Major	Gillespie, A. C.		
79775	Lt.	Gordon, C.	+	
	Lt.	Grady, W. H.		
	Capt.	Graham, W. N.	■	M.C.
	Lt.	Grant, E. G.	O	M. in D.
80137	Lt.	Guy, J. S. P.	O	M.C.
160573	Lt.	Haldane, F. E. B.	O	
	Lt.	Hall, W. J.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

455

NUMBER.	RANK IN UNIT.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79004	Lt.	Hanson, A. C.	O	
79315	Lt.	Hardiman, W. L.		
	Capt.	Harris, W. M.		M.C.
	Lt.	Hart, Chas Henry	O	
	Lt. Col.	Harvey, Valentine V.		
	Lt.	Herbert, E. A. C.		
	Major	Hewgill, William Herbert		O.B.E., M. in D.
696344	Lt.	Higgins, H. S.	O	
	Lt.	Higginson, J. L.		
79578	Capt.	Holden, F. M.	O	M.B.E.
79003	Major	Hornby, Chas. B.	O	M.C. and bar
79091	Capt.	Hunter, Patrick	O	M.C.
79845	Lt.	Hutchinson, J. C.	O	M.C.
80040	Lt.	Irvine, C. H.	+	
	Lt.	Irwin, L. H.	O	
	Major	Jewitt, Walter	O	M.C. and bar
	Capt.	Johnson, A. L. B.	X	
79268	Lt.	Jukes, A. D.		
79270	Lt.	Jull, W. K.	O	M.C.
466402	Capt.	Kennedy, D.	O	
	Capt.	Kennedy, D. B.		
	Capt.	Kennedy, H.	O	D.S.O., M. in D.
79218	Lt.	Keyes, A. F.	II	
79095	Lt.	Kingsmith, P.	X	
79761	Lt.	Knight, C. A.		
	Lt.	Knott, J. E.	O	
	Lt.	Lambart, Chas.		
	Capt.	L'Amy, John Hamptonne	O	M.C. and bar
	Major	Lane, H. N.	O	
	Lt.	Lane, M. P.		
79947	Lt.	Langtry, W.	O	M.M., M. in D.
	Lt.	Law, R. B.	O	
79760	Lt.	Law, T.		
79100	Lt.	Lawson, G.	O	M.C.
	Capt.	Lawson, T. W.		
79303	Lt.	Leek, A. R.	O	M.M.
	Lt.	Leir, W. H.		
	Lt.	Living, A. H.	O	
	Lt.	Long, F. S.	O	M.C.
	Capt.	Martin, Frederick Robt.	O	M. in D.
	Major	Mason, E. G.		
80196	Lt.	Mee, J. N.	+	
160111	Lt.	Merkley, M. E.	+	
	Lt.	Mesney, P.	O	
79195	Lt.	Metcalfe, A. E.	X	M.C.
	Lt.	Mickelwright, Wm.		
	Lt.	Miller, L. W.		
79014	Lt.	Millington, J.	O	M.C.
808790	Lt.	Montgomery, A.		
79754	Lt.	Morgan, H. P.	+	M.M.
	Lt.	Morton, Jas. McL.	+	
	Lt.	Motherwell, William		
80129	Capt.	Murray, D.		M.M., M. in D.
446306	Capt.	Murray, P. S.	O	M. in D.
	Capt.	Myatt, Arthur Egbert	O	O.B.E.
79995	Lt.	McCormick, A.	+	M.M.
231807	Lt.	McDiarmid, C.	O	
	Lt.	MacDonald, E. G.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	RANK IN UNIT.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
	Lt.	McGregor, W. A.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	McIntosh, W.		
	Lt.	McIvor, A. A. J.	O	
231054	Lt.	MacKenzie, D. N.	O	M.M., M.C.
79193	Lt.	MacKenzie, J. A.	O	
	Capt.	McLeod, G. B.		
79116	Lt.	McNally, S. M.	X	
	A/Lt.-Col.	McPherson, C. D.		
	Major	Macpherson, John Carmichael	O	
79866	Lt.	MacPherson, J. L.	+	
	Lt.	McTaggart, G. A.		
79204	Lt.	Meahan, F. C.	O	
80119	Lt.	Neil, E.		
406	Lt.	Newland, F. P. D.	O	M.C.
79183	Capt.	Norris, H.	+	D.S.O., M. in D.
14617	Lt.	O'Hara, J.	O	M.C.
	Hon. Capt.	Page, James Cecil (Q.M.)		
79745	Lt.	Parker, F. G.	O	M.M., M. in D.
	Capt.	Parry, J. L. O. R.		
	Lt.	Parry, T. G.	O	
696277	Lt.	Patterson, M. E.	O	
	Lt.	Pearce, N. C.		M.C.
	Lt.	Peterkin, J. M.	O	
79872	Lt.	Petty, H. N.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	Pinkham, Ernest Fred'k.	+	
	Capt.	Piper, William Warren		
79189	Capt.	Pouncey, Raymond		M.C.
	Major	Powis, G. D.	+	
79598	Lt.	Puffer, S. A.		
	Lt.	Quinlan, R. J. J.		
	Lt.	Richards, Joseph Vanston	+	
696724	Capt.	Richmond, D.	X	
	Capt.	Robertson, D. C.	O	M.C.
79744	Capt	Robertson, G. S.		M.C. and bar
696343	Lt.	Rogers, H. G.	O	M.C.
79659	Lt.	Roughton, A. D.	O	
	Lt.	Roughton, C. F.		
	Lt.	Rubin, C. E.		
	Lt.-Col.	Sanders, G. E.		
79509	Lt.	Sara, J. T. L.	X	
	Capt	Sawley, H.	O	
	Lt.	Scadden, C. M.	X	
	Lt.	Scott, E. L.		Belg. C. de G.
	Lt.	Scott, G. H.	X	M.C.
79719	Major	Seaton, Wm. Fallis	+	M.C.
	Lt.	Sharples, E. A.	+	
	Lt.	Shaw, G. T.	O	
80264	Lt.	Shillam, H.	O	
101303	Lt.	Shillinglaw, L. G.	O	M.C.
460854	Lt.	Simpson, H. E.		
79794	Lt.	Simpson, H. N.	X	
79709	Lt.	Slaven, G. B.		
	Lt.-Col.	Spencer, N.		D.S.O., M. in D.
	Major	Splane, Howard M.	+	
79651	Lt.	Sproston, H.		
	Major	Stewart, John Douglas R.		O.B.E., M. in D., Name brought to notice.
	Lt.	Stillman, W. G.		

31ST BATTALION, C: E. F.

457

NUMBER.	RANK IN UNIT.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.]	AWARDS.
447233	Lt.	Swain, L. R.	+	
	Lt.	Talbourdet, A. J. M.	O	M M.
79788	Lt.	Taylor, C. H.	O	
	Lt.	Terry, W. H. J.	O	
79786	Lt.	Thom, Ernest Colin	+	
	Lt.	Thompson, N.	O	
.....	Lt.	Toft, Paul George	+	
	Lt.	Tompkins, Stuart Ramsay		
.....	Lt.	Toole, A. J.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	Toole, E. T.	+	
.....	Capt.	Tucker, Park Benjamin R.	O	M.C.
	Lt.	Van Dusen, A. S.	O	
79692	Hon. Capt.	Wainwright, Geo.		M.C., M. in D.
79892	Lt.	Wall, A. E.	O	
	Lt.	Watson, J.		
183660	Lt.	Watt, G. E.		
467145	Lt.	Weir, Norman B.		
	Lt.	West, W. C.	O	
79655	Lt.	West, W. G.		M.M., M C.
	Major	Westmore, Chas. Henry		M: in D.
.....	Lt.	Whitehead, Herbert Howard	+	
	Lt.	Whyte, W.	XX	M.C.
.....	Lt.	Wildman, Laurence A.		
	Lt.	Williams, W. H.	O	M.C.
.....	Lt.	Windle, W.		
	Major	Wolley-Dod, A. G.		
.....	Lt.	Wolley-Dod, William Randell	O	
	Lt.	Wood, B. A.		M. in D.
80235	Capt.	Woods, H. McM	O	M C , M. in D.
		Yule, L. B.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

OFFICERS ATTACHED FOR DUTY

RANK.	NAME.	UNIT.	AWARDS.
Capt.	Aitken, J. M.	C.A.P.C.	
H/Capt.	Appleyard, E. (Chaplain)	C.C.S.	M.C.
Capt.	Elliot, H. A.	C.A.P.C.	
Capt.	McGill, Harold Wigmore	C.A.M.C.	
Capt.	Muir, W. L.	C.A.M.C.	
H/Capt.	Palmer, Creighton Ross	C.A.P.C.	
Capt.	Parker, G. P.	C.A.M.C.	
Capt.	Pearson, R.	Y.M.C.A.	
Capt.	Petrie, F. McG.	C.A.M.C.	
H/Capt.	Tait, Wm. Thomas	Y.M.C.A.	
H/Capt.	Walker, Wm. Robt. (Chaplain)	C.C.S.	
Capt.	Whitaker, B. L. (Chaplain)	C.C.S.	
H/Capt.	Wilson, F. B.	Y.M.C.A.	
H/Capt.	Wright, George (Chaplain)	C.C.S.	M.C.
Interpreter	Guillaume, G. M.		

OFFICERS (ATTACHED FOR INSTRUCTION)

RANK.	NAME.	UNIT AND DATE ATTACHED FOR INSTR.
Lt.	Basevi, J.	6 Bde. M. G. Coy. 4-2-16 to 5-3-16
Lt.	Fraser, J. D.	5th C.M.R. 14-3-16 to 14-4-16 3-11-17 to 9-11-17
Lt.-Col.	Cameron, A. D.	35th Bn. 26-4-16 to 26-5-16
Major	Gow, H.	5th C.M.R. 14-3-16 to 14-4-16
Lt.	Harling, J. L.	5th C.M.R. 10-2-17 to 16-2-17
Lt.-Col.	Kirkpatrick, G. H.	5th C.M.R. 14-3-16 to 14-4-16
Lt.	McDonald, J. M.	34th Bn. 23-3-16 to 23-4-16
Lt.-Col.	Oliver, A. J.	2nd C.M.R. 14-3-16 to 14-4-16
Lt.	Quanbury, J. H.	209th Bn. 29-12-16 to 3-1-17
Lt.-Col.	Smyth, W. O.	46th Bn. 26-4-16 to 25-5-16
Lt.-Col.	Snell, H.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

459

LEGEND

† Killed in Action.
 ■ Died of Wounds.
 □ Missing, Presumed Dead.
 △ Died of Disease.
 O Wounded.
 X Prisoner of War.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.		AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.		AWARDS.
		CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.			CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	
80005 Abbott, A. F.	■	O			100381 Alderson, C.	+	O	
231533 Abernethy, J. W. P.	■	O			79349 Aldred, E.		O	
79179 Abigail, R.	■	O			150019 Alexander, J. J.		O	
446906 Adam, G. E.	■	O			898165 Alexandre, S.		O	
2109870 Adams, A. A.	■	O			80138 Allan, G. F.	+	+	
625015 Adams, A. E.	■	O			79033 Allan, J. M.	+	+	
79178 Adams, E. G.	■	O			79611 Allan, J. R. N.			
696785 Adams, E. S.	■	O			101188 Allan, S.			
79803 Adams, H. W. N.	■	O			13813 Allardyce, J. H.	+	+	
183936 Adams, J.	■	O			698069 Allardyce, T.		O	
80174 Adams, J.	■	O			433400 Allen, C. W.		O	
2109827 Adams, L.	■	O			231045 Allen, H.		O	
231451 Adams, W. L.	■	O			1931 Allen, W.			
79360 Adams, W. M.	■	O			18837 Allison, J.		■	
79806 Adamson, A. R.	■	O			2109878 Allison, W. S.		O	
446148 Adamson, J. G. C.	■	O			811831 Alton, M. R.			
434802 Addis, H.	■	O			231673 Alton, S. H.			
79997 Addis, P. E. D.	■	O			79557 Alward, C.			
184241 Adsett, J. W.	■	O			2621913 Amaroni, B.		O	
698317 Adsit, W. R.	■	O			79245 Ancell, Geo. H.			
3208453 Agnew, J.	■	O			186315 Anderson, A.			
696728 Ahearn, E.	■	O			737113 Anderson, A. C.		O	
883055 Aikman, C. W.	■	O			186004 Anderson, A. C.		O	
703435 Ainsworth, A.	■	O			883319 Anderson, C.		O	
79180 Aitchison, S. H.	■	O			2621964 Anderson, C. L.		O	
434100 Aitken, D.	■	O			80006 Anderson, D. S.	+	+	
2621866 Aitken, G.	■	O			3206341 Anderson, D. R.		O	
80276 Aitken, R.	■	O			3206363 Anderson, G. T.			
160884 Alcock, A. H.	■	O			434789 Anderson, H. J.			
80184 Alcock, A. P.	■	O			430381 Anderson, J.			
160592 Alcock, J.	■	O			695554 Anderson, J. C.	+	+	
					183427 Anderson, J. S.		O	
					3206292 Anderson, L.			
					115964 Anderson, L. H.			
					3205985 Anderson, T. G. L.			
					446210 Anderson, W. E. G.			
					3206281 Anderson, W. M.		O	
					625233 Andrieson, J.		O	
					79805 Anger, J. W.			

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES	AWARDS.
79015	Angus, M. R.	O.		696933	Atkinson, A. H.	+	
79247	Antony, W. J.	O.		228257	Atkinson, F. L.	O	
79177	Appleton, H.	M.M.		79248	Atkinson, G. H.	O	
696807	Arber, C. W.	O		231382	Atkinson, R. E.	+	
808515	Arbutnott, J.	O		183656	Atkinson, T.	O	
430937	Archer, G.			696012	Atkinson, W.	O	
231500	Archibald, T. R.			696012	Atkinson, W.	O	
79181	Armit, A. G.	O		79896	Atkinson, W. P.		
424519	Armstrong, A. W.	X		624222	Attlee, E. J.	O	
446370	Armstrong, C.	O		446241	Attard, A.	+	
79361	Armstrong, G. E. L.	O		231148	Attwell, L.		
186010	Armstrong, G. H.	+		3206787	Aubut, R.		
79348	Armstrong, H.	O		79804	Auld, H. J.		
80277	Armstrong, J. A.	O		174306	Auld, W. T.		
625228	Armstrong, J. R.	O		184149	Austin, F.	O	
80147	Armstrong, R. A.	O		425705	Austin, G. B.	+	
477015	Arney, F.	O		183614	Austin, T.		
89528	Arrum, G. D.			80125	Avery, T.		
79030	Arrums, L.			79246	Avery, W.		
811694	Arrowsmith, G.			3205867	Avery, W.	O	
183951	Arthur, F. R.	O		80004	Avison, D. J.	O	
320515	Arthur, J.	O		79031	Awarth, G. T.		
3205843	Artress, J.	O		446833	Ayres, R. J.		
898205	Aschauer, J.	X		79612	Ayling, R.		
101484	Ashford, A.			2310435	Ayrhart, P. E.	O	
79016	Ashley, F.			811933	Bageet, M. G.	X	
3205604	Ashley, G. H.			3205546	Baghall, E. C.		
79029	Ashman, W.			3205275	Bailey, W. H.	O	
164	Ashmore, A. E.	O		79028	Bailey, W. H.		
183611	Ashmore, E. J.			3206456	Bailey, W. J.	X	
79032	Ashton, H. C.	+		80146	Baille, G.		
2137948	Ashton, I. W.	O		79454	Bain, G. E.		
79287	Ashton, L. H.	O	M.M.	2622019	Bain, M. W.	O	
808040	Ashton, R. G.	O		883386	Bainbridge, G. E.	O	
231711	Ashworth, J.	O		434308	Baines, C. D.	O	
430680	Askwith, G. E.	O		793737	Baird, A. B.		
79358	Atherton, N.			3206478	Baird, E. E.	O	
80098	Atherton, S.	O		79370	Baird, T. W.		
231783	Atkins, E. B.	O		435568	Baker, B. G.	+	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

461

3205668	Baker, E. F.	O	O	
446881	Baker, L. R.	O	O	
883628	Baker, R. J.	O	O	M.M.
808474	Baker, W.	O	O	
2330493	Baldock, C.	O	O	
431085	Baldry, C.	O	O	
696152	Baldwin, A.	O	O	
696010	Baldwin, J.	O	O	
874283	Balwin, W.	O	O	
696485	Balkenstein, D. L.	O	O	
79346	Ball, A.	O	O	
424539	Ball, J.	O	O	
79736	Ballantine, A. S.	O	O	
79279	Bamber, S.	O	O	
424542	Bamforth, C.	O	O	
436082	Band, C. J.	O	O	
447466	Banks, H.	O	O	
424545	Banks, J.	O	O	
79897	Bannan, J. C.	O	O	
79364	Bannerman, A.	O	O	
183553	Baptie, A.	O	O	
454525	Barber, C.	O	X	
3205975	Barber, E. H.	O	O	
400652	Barber, I.	O	O	
696444	Barby, A. E.	O	O	
435423	Barclay, E. P.	O	O	
79161	Barclay, J. D.	O	O	
79170	Barclay, J. W.	O	O	
448000	Barket, A. S.	O	O	
160670	Barker, J. S.	O	O	
4100708	Barley, A. H.	O	O	
2270347	Barnacasel, W. J.	O	O	
467231	Barnard, R. J.	O	O	
2109868	Barnard, W. C.	O	M.M.	
883080	Barnes, B. J.	O	M.M.	
79282	Barnes, E.	O	O	
183648	Barnes, P. J.	O	O	
2109891	Barnes, S. M.	O	O	
79244	Barnett, D. G.	O	O	
115902	Barr, J. H.	O	O	
115201	Barr, P.	O	O	
5218	Barrett, O.	O	O	
79366	Barrington, H.	O	O	
100819	Barron, J.	O	O	
79035	Barrons, W.	O	O	
472403	Barry, O.	O	O	
18919	Barthelmy, N.	O	O	
446944	Bartlett, F. B.	O	O	
80132	Bartlett, F. C.	O	O	
79043	Barton, G. R.	O	O	
434676	Barwick, W.	O	O	
2021643	Basey, S. J.	O	O	
602535	Bass, E.	O	O	
2621835	Bate, W.	O	O	
625220	Batemann, C. M.	O	O	
425736	Bateman, J.	O	O	
79372	Bateman, J. W.	O	O	
79285	Bates, W. A. F.	O	O	
115119	Bath, J.	O	O	
80013	Batson, A. R.	O	O	
231161	Batson, F. J.	O	O	
79899	Batty, F.	O	O	
3205024	Baughman, A.	O	O	
79903	Bawden, J. P.	O	O	
696224	Baxter, G. L.	O	O	
79278	Baxter, G. W.	O	O	
79898	Baxter, R. J.	O	O	
2621931	Bayles, I.	O	O	
79368	Beach, O.	O	O	
183740	Bearsto, H.	O	O	
79738	Beal, A. E.	O	O	
467022	Beale, J. E.	O	O	
3205293	Beames, H.	O	O	
2137966	Bearn, R.	O	O	
888102	Beart, E. W.	O	O	
79163	Beaton, D.	O	O	
2138947	Beaton, D.	O	O	
430076	Beaton, H. E.	O	O	
79020	Beatt, S. M.	O	O	
424558	Beattie, A.	O	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
809127	Beattie, F. M.	+		802778	Benoit, J. S.	+
29165	Beattie, W. F.	O	M.M.	79240	Bent, F. M.	O
79809	Beaumont, B.	O		231203	Bentley, J. S.	+
424560	Beaver, J.	O		231221	Bentley, R. G.	O
64006	Beavis, R.	O		424568	Bewell, T. L.	+
183551	Beck, A. G.	O		3205632	Berg, A.	
3206618	Beck, J. C.	O		696800	Berget, O.	
79562	Beckinsale, R. T.	O		2109864	Bergin, C.	□
79280	Beech, C. T.	O		473225	Berry, J.	+
220071	Beeson, G.	O		465246	Berry, N. C.	
160870	Betus, C.	O		61100	Berry, W.	
3206599	Begg, B. D.	O		789187	Bertrand, W.	○
160564	Begg, J. C.	O		184156	Berube, F.	□
231720	Begley, M. S.	O		808602	Berysuk, M.	
3205131	Begbie, J. P. C.	O		174808	Best, E. A.	
3205815	Belanger, W.	O		436951	Beswick, W.	O
115313	Bell, A. S.	O		80178	Bevan, C. E.	O
883065	Bell, D.	O		441341	Bevens, J. E.	O
446592	Bell, G.	O	M.M.	808214	Beveridge, D.	O
161077	Bell, G.	O	D.C.M., Belg. C de G.	183950	Bevis, H. J.	
602283	Bell, J.	O		183507	Beynon, J.	○
79613	Bell, J. M.	O		2115462	Bibby, R.	O
79900	Bell, J. A.	O		438933	Bicknell, F. J.	O
183732	Bell, J. F.	O		79239	Biddle, F. B.	
144919	Bell, J. T.	O		79365	Biddle, G. A. C.	O
424565	Bellegraves, A.	O		438138	Biggins, F. H.	O
252840	Bellinger, J. C.	O		436790	Biggs, L. J.	O
446779	Benjamin, G.	O		424577	Bignell, W. D.	O
446589	Benjamin, W.	O		2621843	Bilkey, F.	+
23137	Bennett, A. B.	O		696784	Bills, S. H.	O
79901	Bennett, F.	O	M. M. and bar	2138073	Bildeau, A.	
79174	Bennett, F. C.	O	Belg. Dec. Mil	808316	Bird, F. W.	
				2621897	Bird, J. H.	+
				434190	Birkill, T. M.	□
				2621889	Birkin, E.	O
				126573	Bishop, J.	O
				3106299	Bishop, R.	O
				100047	Bissett, G.	+
696033	Bennett, M. J.	O		3203848	Bissett, G.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

463

435450	Bissonnette, L.	+	M.M.	O	
101287	Black, H. H.	O			
3206488	Black, H. J.	O		O	
883665	Black, I.	O		O	
79369	Black, P. C.	O		O	
467508	Black, W.	O		O	
79812	Blackburn, J. H.	O			
187520	Blackhall, H. H.	O			
79286	Blackier, O.	O		+	
3205803	Blackley, C. P.	O			
79811	Blacklock, F.				
77977	Blair, J.				
79167	Blair, R. E.				
79036	Blair, W.				
231603	Blake, G. K.				
79037	Blake, G. V. C.				
696502	Blakeley, W. E.				
79810	Blankensee, M. R.				
231735	Bland, G.	O			
3205560	Blane, A.	O			
79902	Blegis, J.				
911391	Blench, R.				
435434	Blight, H.	+		O	
79614	Bliss, F.	O			
696210	Bliss, J.	O			
231695	Blois, L. E.	O			
160833	Bloom, A.	O			
1003432	Bloom, E.	O			
523451	Bloom, H.	O			
523076	Bloom, H. C.	O			
430542	Bloom, J.	O			
446574	Bloor, A.	O			
696251	Blossom, W. E.	+			
231484	Bordman, A. T.				
424587	Bodkin, J. B.	O			
3207390	Boadwell, J. F.	O			
401248	Bogner, J.	O			
696669	Boles, D. E.	O			
79739	Bolton, F. C.	O			
3205274	Bolton, G. W.	O		O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	CASUALTIES. AWARD.		
				NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.
80207	Bowyer, W. F.	O		101069	Broderick, C. A.	O
161160	Boyack, G.	I.		3206197	Brodie, P.	O
80159	Boyce, B.	+		435203	Brook, J. A.	
79344	Boyce, S. L.			231469	Brooke, W. T.	O
696061	Boyd, J. J.			2109857	Brooker, H.	
79018	Boyd, M. A.			811799	Brookes, W. G.	
79040	Boyer, E. W.			424612	Brooks, D. N.	
100034	Boyer, F. W.	O		79907	Brotherton, J. T.	
760574	Bracewell, M. W.			430216	Brousseau, C.	O
80123	Bradbury, D.	O		3206380	Browers, A. A.	O
80010	Bradfield, W.			79041	Brown, A.	
424598	Bradford, F. R.	O		808023	Brown, A.	
447377	Bradford, L. E.			79807	Brown, A. E.	
3205970	Bradley, F. D.			52389	Brown, A. G.	
100617	Bradley, L. P.	O		430962	Brown, C. C.	
1941	Bradshaw, T.			231544	Brown, C. H.	O
3205911	Bramwell, W. F.	+		270643	Brown, C. M.	
183610	Brander, A.			696240	Brown, D. S.	O
115930	Brasnett, H. G.	O		184248	Brown, E. J.	O
446264	Brassington, W.			115815	Brown, G. V.	O
160359	Brazeau, G.	+		1004142	Brown, H.	
883457	Breckow, W. G.	O		883369	Brown, H. D.	
80008	Bremner, T.	+		100949	Brown, H. E.	O
696228	Brennan, R.			696102	Brown, H. L.	
3205750	Brett, G. W.	O		79367	Brown, H. J. S.	O
				696901	Brown, J.	
79284	Brewster, C.	#		79242	Brown, J. E.	
3206199	Brewster, G.	O		808277	Brown, J. G.	+ O
183492	Bricker, A.			73977	Brown, D.	
100198	Bridgewood, I. E.	O		79906	Brown, J. E.	
808475	Bridson, W. F.	O		79363	Brown, J. E.	
3205823	Bright, C. E.			101123	Brown, J. G.	
79905	Bright, T.			231284	Brown, Lee	
79164	Brighty, R.	O		79839	Brown, Lee	
417199	Brisson, A.	O		523188	Brown, P. R.	O
79736	Bristow, R.			2517340	Brown, R.	O
4246609	Broadfoot, G.	O		447023	Brown, R.	O
79172	Broadhead, K. H.	+		436252	Brown, R. G.	O
79171	Brocklehurst, A.			219822	Brown, S.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

465

3206118	Brown, W.		+
721740	Brown, W.		
3205149	Brown, W. C.	O	
883611	Brown, W. J.	O	
79371	Brown, W. T.		
183770	Browne, W. J.	O	
808108	Brownlie, J. C.	O	
3030887	Brownlee, R.		
430208	Bruce, G.	O	
160191	Bruce, M. A.	M.M.	
15647	Bruce, W. A.	X	
231276	Brunyee, J.	+	
883302	Bryan, H. V.	O	
696258	Bryant, E. M.		
446912	Bryden, C. V.	O	
79044	Bryden, N.		Belg. C. de G.
809042	Bubb, W. A.	O	
79808	Buch, J. C.		
79345	Buchan, E. W.		
79362	Buchanan, J.	+	
79561	Buchanan, H.		
80183	Buck, A.	O	
79168	Buck, D.		
2303872	Buckley, D. J.		
447265	Buckley, J. A.	+	
80007	Buckley, R.	O	
808357	Budge, A. G.		
160907	Bufiton, F. H.	O	
3205712	Buhner, F.		
1835511	Buist, R. H.	+	
3806	Bullen, J.	O	
225530	Bullock, W.		
80168	Bulmann, H. J.		
3205299	Bulmer, H. W.	O	
183664	Bunyan, N.	+	
79175	Burberry, R. J.	O	
3205325	Burby, L.		
231467	Burchell, T. E.	+	
690088	Burhoe, R. N.	O	
80105	Burke, E. J.	O	
18478	Burke, Thos.		
424626	Burkett, C. F.		
447982	Burleigh, E. B.	O	
79558	Burnett, J.		
80009	Burney, H.	+	
100355	Burns, J. M.	O	
79560	Burns, J. R.	O	
504149	Burns, J. A.		
79559	Burns, S.		
79281	Burns, T. J.		
696517	Burr, G.	O	
696122	Burrell, A. G.	O	
160793	Burroughs, G.		
220262	Burrows, F.		
424634	Burton, G.	O	
115862	Burton, R.	O	
115863	Burton, R. C.	O	
800112	Burwell, W. H.		
2109929	Bury, C. L.	+	
249244	Butchart, W. W.		
183604	Butcher, N. S.	O	
183495	Butler, H. J.	O	
79169	Butler, J. V.	+	
790117	Butson, F. W.		
80011	Butt, A.	O	
430274	Butterfield, D. C.		
101260	Butterfield, N. C.		
430276	Butterfield, P.	X	
231185	Butterworth, F. C.	O	
447858	Buttiniore, T. H.	O	
79243	Buttress, F.	X	
2621033	Buzzell, C. F.		
651137	Byers, M. A.		
249417	Byers, R. B.		
79813	Byford, H.	O	
2448545	Cabanaw, J.	O	
696750	Cady, W.		
22030928	Cafferty, J. L.	O	
5221	Caffin, A.	O	X
79517	Cagney, J.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
875461	Caird, J. B.	O		808347	Campbell, J. V.	O	
231157	Cairns, J. C.			466211	Campbell, K.		
80030	Caldewell, F. G.	+ O		3207331	Campbell, L.		
79817	Calder, J.	O	M.S.M.	79380	Campbell, L. A.		
79909	Calder, R.	O		3205093	Campbell, M. J.		
79275	Caldwell, J.	O		808635	Campbell, N. H.		
2621963	Calloun, H. A.			79237	Campbell, P. J.		
435048	Calkins, B.	O		424647	Campbell, S.		
79518	Call, A.			115773	Campbell, T.	O	
79054	Callaghan, I. E.	+ O		446923	Campbell, T. S.	O	D.C.M.
183716	Callahan, J.	O		231258	Campbell, T. S.		
79048	Callaway, R.			79453	Campbell, W.		
696645	Callier, S. W.	O		3205776	Campbell, W. S.		
79732	Cameron, C.			79327	Campbell, W. T.		
101141	Cameron, D. R.	O		447044	Capoquin, C.		
79277	Cameron, G. N.			3314082	Canavan, P.		
2355374	Cameron, H. D.	+ O		79343	Canning, S. E.		
430387	Cameron, Jr.		M.M.	696796	Cannon, A.		
231810	Cameron, J. A.			183988	Centrell, J.		
883287	Cameron, J. H.			161274	Cantwell, E.		
320797	Cameron, M.			434343	Capewell, J.		
80266	Cameron, O. F.	O		808928	Capucci, N.		
430001	Cameron, R.	O		228279	Carl, J. S.		
79734	Cameron, Wm.	O		79232	Carleton, J. W. F.		
446928	Camp, J.			523169	Carlisle, S.	O	
79733	Camp, S. T.			3206644	Carlson, W. J.	O	
320559	Campbell, A.	O		3205715	Carmichael, J.		
446372	Campbell, A.	O		883358	Carr, F. E.		
6963275	Campbell, D.			79910	Carroll, J.		
79819	Campbell, D.	O		100856	Carruthers, W. C.	O	
79516	Campbell, D.	O	M.M.	447995	Carruthers, W. K.		
231789	Campbell, E.	O		183475	Carry, R. L.		
79385	Campbell, F.			79521	Carsell, Q.		
430286	Campbell, F. H.	+ O		446029	Carson, C. M.		
231558	Campbell, H. B.	+ O		79568	Carter, A.		
430085	Campbell, I.	+ O		808990	Carter, G. F.		
4463608	Campbell, J.			79563	Carter, G. H.		
4463693	Campbell, J.	O		79276	Carter, J. F.	O	
80017	Campbell, J. A.	+ O		171982	Carter, J.	O	

696717	Carter, S.	W. A.	O	79911	Chapman, W. J.	.....	0
79159	Carter, W.	A.	O	2138244	Chappell, S.	.....	0
79296	Cartew, J.	H.	O	161051	Chapple, W.	J.	O
79378	Cartmell, E.	.....	O	417465	Charbonneau, V.	.....	O
3130862	Casemore, G.	.....	O	424657	Chard, P. E.	.....	+
696631	Cashore, J.	H.	O	424658	Chard, R. A.	.....	+
101047	Casson, G.	E.	O	79374	Charles, T.	.....	0
79051	Castiglione, V.	S.	O	3205080	Charles, W.	.....	0
624943	Castlemann, G.	D.	O	844216	Charrington, H.	J.	0
466792	Cassane, J.	.....	O	183795	Chesser, A.	.....	0
100431	Catrano, A.	.....	O	160892	Chesson, E.	T.	O
80182	Causgrove, W.	.....	O	2137985	Chevalier, G.	L.	0
79820	Caultley, C.	M.	O	79912	Chick, J.	.....	0
808070	Cave, F.	R.	O	80122	Chilton, F.	.....	0
430404	Cavendish, J.	.....	O	1949	Chilton, G.	.....	O
80167	Cawthorn, H.	.....	O	2517355	Chilvers, C.	E.	O
883597	Center, W.	J.	O	883464	Chinnery, J.	A.	0
2621981	Ceser, E.	C.	O	3205598	Chisholm, D.	C.	O
3205883	Chadwick, F.	W.	O	736290	Chisholm, J.	M.	O
434355	Chadwick, J.	F.	O	79233	Chittcock, W.	J.	O
2507344	Chadwick, P.	A.	O	231607	Chivers, L.	T.	O
79373	Chale, A.	A.	O	895033	Choate, C.	A.	O
80241	Chafe, F.	H.	O	79274	Choquette, V.	.....	O
79100	Chalker, W.	H.	O	80140	Christian, G.	.....	O
3205612	Challenger, W.	S.	O	424668	Christie, J.	.....	O
811007	Chalmers, A.	.....	O	183566	Christie, N.	.....	O
904349	Chalmers, F.	.....	O	231159	Christie, R.	W.	0
79238	Chalmers, J.	D.	O	696366	Christofferson, H.	P.	O
2114931	Chalmers, R.	L.	O	3130869	Churchill, A.	E.	O
2355602	Chalquist, A.	T.	O	2621839	Clague, R.	.....	O
2621862	Chambers, C.	.....	O	79236	Clandillon, W.	P.	O
696320	Chambers, T.	S.	X	79823	Clark, C.	A.	O
2109876	Chandler, L.	D.	O	424671	Clark, F.	W.	O
883349	Chandler, R.	H.	O	79371	Clark, G.	E.	O
651645	Channing, J.	R.	O	624824	Clark, S.	.....	O
696370	Chapman, E.	R.	O	100366	Clark, W.	B.	O
2622021	Chapman, F.	C.	O	895543	Clarke, C.	.....	O
80262	Chapman, H.	H.	O	160374	Clarke, E.	.....	O
811547	Chapman, L.	R.	O X	424670	Clarke, F.	C.	O
696689	Chapman, R.	II.	O	624806	Clarke, F.	P.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
231080	Clarke, G.	O		80222	Coleman, J.	
446432	Clarke, H.	O		79520	Coleman, L.	P
79158	Clarke, J. W.	O		424690	Collett, A.	I. C.
425534	Clarke, R. W.	O		50466	Collins, A.	F.
466140	Clarke, W. R.	O		808994	Collin, W. J.	
422872	Clarkson, G.	O		446339	Collins, E.	C
79156	Clarkson, H. H.	+ O		240237	Collins, F.	J. G.
80280	Clarkson, L.	+ O		696376	Collins, M.	E.
466207	Clax, A.	O		6966663	Collins, T.	J.
408607	Clearwater, F.	O		424693	Collins, V.	
3205476	Cleary, J.	+ O	M.M.	80203	Collins, W.	
100367	Clegg, A. H.	O		696378	Collins, W.	L.
160860	Clifford, A. W.	O		3205069	Colliver, T.	
467064	Clifford, C.	O		446818	Coquhoun, A. H.	S
446471	Clifton, A.	O		79154	Coquhoun, H.	
446061	Clifton, F.	O		160366	Coutman, J.	V.
3205301	Clogg, A. A.	O		79918	Comber, J.	H.
79379	Close, L.	O		3205538	Comfort, A.	M.
100548	Close, W. L.	O		79052	Connell, J.	F. B.
5174	Clootman, J. P.	P		79564	Connell, R.	
79814	Clowes, R. H. A.	O		231593	Connelly, I.	V.
446632	Clow, R.	O		696795	Conning, C.	
79047	Clyne, H.	O		696659	Connig, J.	
79375	Coad, R. G.	+ O		730445	Connolly, E.	B.
696844	Coates, C. R.	O		696746	Connolly, T.	
3233353	Corfran, W.	O		79056	Constable, F.	L.
603118	Cochrane, J. G.	O		696579	Connor, J. H.	
1066068	Cochrane, R. A.	O		696896	Connor, A.	F.
79913	Cockburn, S.	O		231060	Connor, F.	
424684	Cocking, A. L.	O		624372	Connoly, W.	M.
160349	Coffay, T. R.	O		696200	Constable, H. R.	
696875	Coghill, A. C.	O	M.M.	424700	Cook, E.	H.
101493	Cohen, A.	O		696543	Cook, E.	J.
79377	Coldwell, W. E.	+ O		115874	Cook, J.	E.
696407	Cole, D.	O		79021	Cook, R.	
19052	Cole, E. G.	O	M.S.M.	79566	Cook, W.	
79998	Cole, T. M.	O		79155	Cooke, A.	A.
3206934	Cole, W.	O		696953	Cooke, A.	A.
431140	Coleman, G.	O		606668	Cooke, W. II.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

469

1160849	Coombes, J.		Cox, H. C.	7
883036	Cooper, C. W.	"	Cox, J. H.	
79822	Cooper, S. H.	"	Coyle, R.	
80114	Corbett, C.	"	Cragg, W.	
80223	Corbett, R. J.	+	Craig, E. C.	
79914	Corbin, Reg.		Craig, S.	
1183953	Corby, H.	"	808843	Craigie, S.
1000382	Cordell, A.		184256	Craigie, J. D.
79855	Corder, Vance		79883	Craigie, J. H.
1183211	Corderoy, S. T.		183663	Craigie, P. L.
1183212	Corderoy, V. C.		79886	Cramb, H.
79153	Cordingly, R. C.	"	183759	Crane, H. F.
409560	Corfield, A.	"	108029	Cranston, G.
79046	Corkill, J. G.	OX	183788	Cranston, G. A.
231279	Cormick, C.	"	79816	Crosswell, J. W.
809066	Cornford, R. H.	"	696628	Craven, H.
434147	Corp, W. J.	"	160657	Crawford, A. B.
205845	Cotaras, P.	"	231582	Crawford, J. L.
79384	Cotter, Chas. H.	"	3317024	Crawford, P. R.
467097	Cotterill, J.	O	3205129	Crawford, T.
79049	Coitton, J.	"	02682	Crease, J. C.
113879	Coull, J. H.	"	80127	Crear, J.
79050	Coulthurst, R. L.	"	80201	Cressey, H. S.
883156	Coulthwaite, J.	"	151819	Cressey, J. S.
231393	Counis, E.	"	220592	Crickitt, J. J.
446153	Couper, R. R.	"	79381	Crippen, W. W.
446154	Coupland, W. J.	O	79818	Crisman, H. A.
435447	Courtney, James	O	514906	Crispin, R. J.
205254	Cousins, E.	"	79157	Crittall, H. P.
205252	Coutts, B. A.	O	802567	Crockett, L. A.
1101611	Coutts, C. R.	+	101332	Croft, A.
4424707	Coutts, L. N.	"	79815	Croft, H. C.
231081	Cowan, J. H.	O	808050	Croft, H. F.
792763	Cowgill, J. S. N.	"	793565	Crombie, G. B. H.
621863	Cowie, A.	"	160494	Cronk, W. E.
161092	Cowie, A.	OX	100019	Crook, T.
895400	Cowling, W. A.	"	523154	Crook, H. J.
883569	Cox, C. N. M.	"	696338	Crookes, F. B.
79057	Cox, F. B.	"	79057	Cropper, E.
231672	Cox, F. G.	O	523460	Cross, C.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	M.M.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	M.M.
226549	Cross, C. T. A.	O			80016	Curtis, C. F.	+ +		
101254	Cross, J. H. P.	O			231150	Curtis, N. G.			
1048697	Cross, W.	O			213745	Curtis, R. W.			
696390	Crossfield, G. F.	O			79916	Cutler, H.	O		
79235	Crossland, W. A.	+			79917	Cutler, T.	+		
2621834	Crossman, A. L.	O			446680	Cutmore, E. W.			
3205806	Crough, J. V.	O			1003891	Cyr, D.			
231315	Crow, F. G.	+			101115	Cyr, J.			
202108	Crowe, B. J.	O			79828	Dace, T.			
252536	Crowley, J.	O			2115430	Dafoe, E. F.			
100494	Crowley, J.	O			478917	Dahlin, G. A.			
79915	Crowther, C. A.	O			430156	Daley, J.			
2621819	Crozier, H. H.	O			447345	Daly, J.			
425650	Cruise, R. W.	¶			3232374	Daly, T. J.	O		
1005151	Crumb, J. W.	O			79230	Daniel, W.	+		
80175	Crumbiehulme, F.	O			425717	Danard, A. W.	O		
79382	Crittenden, F. T.	O			3237758	D'Andrea, J.	O		
231182	Chubitt, W. J.	O			180037	Dandridge, J.			
92842	Cudney, W. E.	O			696396	Daniel, A. J. C.	O		
446623	Cullen, D. L.	+			2621827	Daniels, F. A.	O		
808344	Cullen, E. K.	O			2311797	Dann, S. H.	O		
883417	Cuming, D. R.	O			446705	Darling, D.			
883420	Cunning, J. H.	O			696570	Darnell, L.			
811357	Cunning, A. E.	+			101066	Darragh, J. E.			
808004	Cunning, G.	O			79387	Date, F. W.			
252613	Cunning, J. D.	O			100146	Daugerty, J. H.	+		
811802	Cunning, J. P.	O			80130	Davenport, A.			
8071	Cunning, J. S.	O			3231746	Davenport, F.			
811435	Cunning, W. L.	O			79389	Davey, G. W.	O		
2115147	Cummings, J.	O			535553	Davidson, A.	O		
2314983	Cunliffe, D. R.	O			231290	Davidson, A.	O		
231437	Cunningham, A.	O			79570	Davidson, A. H.			
183382	Cunningham, F.	O			79388	Davidson, A. W.			
424718	Cunningham, J. P.	O			425709	Davidson, F. R.			
100489	Cupples, A.	O			463444	Davidson, H.			
2138387	Cupples, D.	¶			437297	Davidson, J.			
80112	Currie, A.	O			2115221	Davidson, R.			
183365	Currie, A.	O			80279	Davidson, W. M.	O		
3105282	Currie, J. W.	+			79390	Davies, A. B.	D.C.M.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

471

80020	Davies, E.	79149	Davies, E. A.	O	79325	Detens, G.	3207340	Delorme, W.	O
3206782	Davies, E. G.	3205822	Davies, G. F.	O	161024	Delplanche, Victor	79062	Dennis, W.	O
1048817	Davies, J.	160221	Davies, J.	O	79326	Desautel, E.	100052	Deyher, A.	O
79060	Davies, T. P.	2448481	Davies, W. H.	X	2115429	Desymer, A.	8836441	Derouin, J.	O
2621919	Davis, A. E.	696861	Davis, F.	+	3106054	Deroux, C.	624622	De Santos, J.	O
473235	Davis, G. G.	183759	Davis, H. E.	O	696607	Desharnais R. L.	3206474	Desipse, E. J.	O
3130959	Davis, H. M.	252466	Davis, R. C.	O	100130	Desmond, H. S.	883555	Dethler, A.	O
231249	Davis, S. L.	430832	Davis, T. L.	O	696440	Dever, D.	79148	Devico, H. F.	O
3207301	Davis, W.	186084	Davis, W.	O	103056	Devlin, S. H.	434381	Devlin, T.	O
79729	Daw, J. W.	80101	Dawes, W. C.	O	3207678	Dewar, A.	904577	Dewar, J.	O
79826	Dawson, C. B.	285286	Dawson, H.	+	461506	Dewar, W. J.	79152	Devind, F.	+
79829	Dawson, H. J.	79323	Dawson, M. W.	O	625051	De Witt, C. A.	183803	De Witt, C. A.	O
101412	Day, C. H.	3206507	Day, E.	O	183803	Dev, J.	70825	Dhondt, A.	O
3206507	Day, E.	79569	Day, G. O.	O	79919	Dibble, T.	79919	Dibble, T.	O
424733	Day, H. L.	2215428	Dea, A. P.	O	79824	Dick, J. P.	79146	Dickens, A. W.	O
6027446	Deadman, W. J.	127078	Deal, A. E.	+	2621953	Dickie, W. E.	79392	Difley, H. E.	O
2021955	Dean, G.	503309	Dean, W.	O	70571	Dimmock, F. G.	383235	Dimock, M. C.	O
446430	Dearden, A.	100989	Debenham, F. W.	O	696823	Dinwoolie, G. A.	467341	Dix, G. L.	X
696512	Debow, J. S.	80019	Decastro, G.	O	100820	Dixon, G. E.	883774	Dixon, J.	O
808927	DeCima, A.	115838	DeLamere, S.	O	183501	Dixon, J.	401022	Dixon, W.	O
696932	Delaney, R. E.	2621943	Dobbs, A. II	X	3206102	Dobbs, A. II	2621943	Dobias, L. II	+

V.C. (with 15th
R.I. Rifles)

M.M.

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	M in D.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
678107	Dobney, A. D.				883701	Dowling, D.		
80131	Dobson, C. W.				79726	Dowrie, G.		O
80021	Dobson, I.				161233	Dowrie, J.		O
231507	Dodds, G. E.	O			808370	Dowling, G. A.		O
809148	Dodds, J. Ag. W.	+			808253	Dowling, W. J.		+
183887	Dodridge, P. C.				115923	Dowssett, D.		O
3030110	Doel, H. J.				79059	Dowssett, E.		
883149	Doepel, H. G.				2621828	Doyle, H. R.		O
19266	Doheny, J.				231516	Doyle, J. H.		+
80018	Doherty, J. B.				3233269	Doyle, J. J.		O
79827	Doherty, J. H.				79061	Doyle, J. O.		O
19116	Doleman, W.				3314178	Doyle, P.		
809141	Dolman, R.	O			693842	Drawinski, J. P.		+
184076	Dominic, J.	O			697086	Drew, E.		O
436058	Donald, A.	+			883584	Drinnan, J. M.		O
809159	Donald, C. W.	O			3206311	Druse, C.		O
3231987	Donald, F.	O			2138045	Drummond, D.		
79728	Donald, J. M.				4665522	Dryburgh, W.		M.M.
79324	Donald, J. N.	O			434410	Dryden, V. T.		O
2109889	Donaldson, A.	O			3231373	Dubau, H. J.		
160075	Donaldson, D.	+			790615	Duchesnay, A. J.		
696792	Donaldson, E. V.				2021138	Dudley, H. J.		
447646	Donaldson, K.	O			79147	Dudley, R. F.		
5103	Donaldson, R. B.	O			79229	Duff, J.		+
79452	Donaldson, Wm.	O			160691	Duff, J.		O
183555	Donegan, G. W.	+			231656	Duffell, H. J.		
79727	Donnelly, J.				100491	Duffy, H.		O
161308	Donnelly, W. H.	+			434671	Dugdale, R.		O
883253	Dorman, R.	O			231263	Duguid, J. P.		O
79342	Dougan, D.	O			808578	Duhaine, N.		O
231069	Dougherty, M. J.	O			4100382	Dumaine, G. R.		O
240076	Dougherty, W. R.	O			231166	Dunbar, F. G.		M.M.
79024	Douglas, C. D.	+			4082549	Duncan, G. A.		O
808356	Douglas, O. H.	O			79231	Duncan, J.		
183196	Douglas, T.				231811	Duncan, J. E.		+
79730	Doull, G.				231428	Duncan, W. J.		O
100622	Dove, E. R.	O			433727	Dunlop, W.		O
2621944	Dow, T.				3232971	Dunn, A.		O
434764	Dower, J.	+			231246	Dunn, H. B.		+

Belg. C de G.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

473

		Med. Mil.
231177	Dunn, R. E.	+ +
1004244	Dunn, V. W.	0
79063	Dunne, J.	0
79391	Dunhill, S. B.	0
883232	Dumphry, A.	0
174736	Dumphry, G. C.	0
79064	Dunstall, A. J.	0
79150	Dunster, G. E. B.	0
430823	Durham, A.	0
3206675	Durham, F.	0
424757	Durie, J.	0
472076	Duriex, H.	M.M.
161162	Duthoya, J.	0
231206	Dwyer, J. J.	0
446084	Dyer, L. B.	+ □
79920	Dyer, D. M.	M.M.
3231464	Dynes, J.	0
80024	Eade, T. E.	0
446283	Eagle, F. G.	+ □
231557	Eartlick, W. F.	0
808255	Eccles, A. E.	□
100939	Eckford, H. H.	0
446248	Ede, P. J.	M.M.
79397	Edgar, D. W.	+ □
79068	Edgar, T.	0
79393	Edmonds, C. C.	0
101620	Edmunds, J. T.	0
2115465	Edstrom, C. E.	+ □
160180	Edwards, F.	+ □
79396	Edwards, G.	0
231046	Edwards, G.	0
430015	Edwards, H.	0
79830	Edwards, H. H.	0
2138474	Edwards, I. T.	0
3205690	Eggan, B. O.	0
3205580	Eggan, P.	0
678111	Egley, C.	0
1037269	Elder, A.	0
160924	Elder, J.	0
231394	Eley, J.	0
79725	Elgar, W.	+
3207474	Ellenton, J. E.	0
231551	Ellett, J. F.	0
447064	Ellinson, H.	0
231377	Elliott, E. G.	+
422040	Elliott, W. W.	0
446324	Elliott, A. M.	+
171983	Elliott, G. F.	+
79066	Elliott, H.	0
696455	Elliott, J. R.	0
79025	Elliott, J. C.	0
430055	Elliott, W. R.	0
79394	Elliott, W. R.	+
2621861	Ellis, C. P.	0
7945	Ellis, C. T.	0
231070	Ellis, J.	0
696812	Ellis, J. F.	0
182491	Ellis, M. L.	0
160079	Ellis, R.	0
160391	Ellis, T.	0
231617	Ellis, T.	0
697008	Ellis, W.	0
696135	Ellis, W. H.	0
23921	Ellison, C.	0
435272	Ellison, G.	0
79533	Ellison, J. B.	0
3317031	Ellison, R. F.	0
89170	Emore, L. L.	0
808728	Erlick, R. M.	0
696286	Elsey, J. T.	+
79070	Embrey, J.	0
80022	Emery, F.	0
811730	Empey, H.	X
80023	Emsie, J.	M.M.
2621811	Entante, W.	0
3205614	Engels, Q.	0
3205613	Engels, R.	0
446168	Eagle, P.	0
160529	Enteknap, A. A.	0
696727	Erickson, C. G.	0

31ST BATTALION, C.E.F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES	AWARDS.			NAME.	CASUALTIES	AWARDS.
101457	Erickson, A. W.	O				183536	Farquhar, W.	+
696786	Erskine, W. R.	O				79443	Farquharson, S. R.	
2021832	Erwin, J. T.	O				809129	Faulkner, W.	O
79831	Essery, W.	O				3206087	Favel, J.	
808063	Etches, R. D.	O				883644	Fear, H. S. G.	O
80158	Etheridge, S. E.	O				2021640	Fee, G. S.	+
79395	Etheridge, E.	O				883249	Fellows, A. W.	O
3205920	Etty, R. M.	O				231037	Fenby, H.	+
425544	Evans, A. H.	O				80154	Fennell, R.	
101112	Evans, C. S.	O				2527340	Fennell, W.	O
152908	Evans, E.	O				115269	Fennings, J. N.	O
434506	Evans, E. N.	O				3206869	Fenton, N. C.	
79067	Evans, G. O.	O				100316	Ferguson, F.	O
160455	Evans, J.	O				1435833	Ferguson, J.	+
184142	Evans, R. G.	O				435845	Ferguson, R.	
101028	Evans, T.	O				424783	Ferguson, S. F.	O
79522	Evans, W. R.	O				838282	Ferguson, W. B.	
79026	Exton, H. J. G.	O				808278	Ferguson, W. R.	
184226	Eyreley, C. A.	O				2115769	Ferguson, A. M.	+
100667	Eyre, W.	O				895176	Ferrier, C. G.	M.M.
79141	Fairburn, J. R.	O				1005006	Ferrier, I. C.	O
80195	Fairbank, W. H.	O				231145	Ferris, W. H.	
100554	Fairless, E. W.	O				101526	Field, J.	+
80226	Fairley, John	O				79721	Fielding, J. A. C.	
79833	Fairley, Joseph	O				603090	Figuers, H. J.	
						101070	Fildes, G. C.	
696906	Fairweather, E. C.	O				279614	Filgate, E.	O
697054	Falconer, A.	O				624697	Filipenko, J.	O
79139	Falconer, E. W.	O				434610	Finch, G.	O
79450	Falk, H. W.	O				2106998	Finch, J. E.	
2021700	Falkus, S. H.	O				100225	Findlay, J.	
79340	Falle, T. de C.	O				795772	Findlater, A.	
3106018	Fallion, J.	O				252062	Fines, R.	
184062	Fallwell, D. V.	O				79776	Fintayson, J.	
79228	Fardell, H. N. G.	O				3206138	Finley, A. C.	
3105836	Farley, F. L.	O				793320	Finnigan, E.	
1004206	Farley, S.	O				80027	Finnon, J. W.	
23528329	Farmer, J.	O				79922	Fisher, F.	
79226	Farmer, T. J.	O				79573	Fisher, G. E.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

475

430822	Fisher, J.		+ .
79138	Fisher, W. J.	O	
1206193	Fiske, A. W.	O	
160921	Fiske, K. R.	+	
79832	Fitzgerald, T. E.	O	
473053	Fitzpatrick, T. J.	O	
183039	Fitz-Roy, B. E.	O	
183516	Fleming, T.	O	
79574	Fleming, W. A.	O	
79777	Flemings, R. G.	O	
0021585	Flett, W. A.	O	M.M.
49409	Eلت, P. L.	O	
79144	Flood, J. C.	O	
697013	Flood, T. A.	O	
808037	Florence, I.	O	
100874	Flynn, D. J.	O	
231457	Flynn, S. T.	O	
435624	Foden, G. L.	O	
696693	Foin, G. C. F.	O	
79075	Foley, A. H.	O	
79923	Fooks, E. J.	O	
80081	Fooks, J. H.	O	
696811	Forbes, G. D.	O	
696352	Forbes, H.	O	M.M.
696623	Forbes, P. D.	O	
231423	Forbes, W. A.	O	
79140	Ford, A. J.	+	
697024	Ford, I. O.	O	
662183	Ford, W.	+	
160217	Ford, W. J.	O	
625142	Foreman, H. M.	O	
79451	Forge, A.	O	
80120	Forge, H.	O	
625018	Forrest, R. J.	O	
80252	Forshaw, A. E.	+	
883056	Forsythe, J. McC.	O	
183608	Fortune, G. C.	O	
183681	Forward, J.	O	
183818	Foster, A. C.	O	
424797	Foster, H. V.	O	M.M.
160426	Foster, J.	O	
908196	Foster, J. T.	O	
2115306	Foster, N. C.	O	
434921	Foster, W. C.	O	
79778	Fotheringham, A.	O	
231567	Fotheringham, T.	O	
3206034	Fournier, L.	O	
160880	Fowler, G. B.	O	
654724	Fowler, R.	O	
79321	Fowles, L.	O	
435447	Fox, J.	O	
700993	Foxcroft, T. J.	O	
895169	Fox-Rogers, R. A.	O	
3105639	Fraenkel, S. T.	O	
696834	Frakes, C. E.	O	
161028	Franklin, A. E.	O	
424801	Franklin, J.	O	
79227	Fraser, A. P.	O	
883807	Fraser, B.	O	
.696853	Fraser, D.	O	
79720	Fraser, D.	O	
80217	Fraser, J.	O	
883590	Fraser, J. E.	O	
435637	Fraser, J. M.	O	
434702	Fraser, K.	O	
80181	Fraser, M. W.	O	
183609	Fraser, R.	O	
79142	Fraser, R. St. C.	O	
737199	Fraser, T. A.	O	
80163	Fraser, W. M.	O	
808952	Fraser, W. W.	O	
183305	Frederick, C.	O	
790483	Freeman, B. D.	O	
624483	Freeman, S. H.	O	
79924	Freer, Geo.	O	
809181	Freer, H. D.	O	
252886	French, E.	O	
3130977	French, F. C.	O	
696832	French, R. C. A.	O	
231620	Fretz, F. L.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
80185	Frewin, A.	O		430089	Garrett, E.	O	M.M.
79723	Friesen, C. A.	O	M. in D.	446757	Garrison, C. L.	O	M.M.
79071	Frisk, A.			79298	Garrison, H.		
808696	Frith, F. H.	X		808147	Garrad, E. W.		
434427	Fudge, J. H.			160177	Garrad, S. L.		
2109884	Fudge, W. F.	O	M.M.	183559	Gaskell, C. C. T.	O	
231332	Fulcher, H. A.	O		696157	Gaskell, J.	O	
231122	Fuller, John H.	+		792926	Gaskell, S.		
2330473	Fullerton, C. V.	O		3105920	Gassage, F. B.		
231749	Fulington, A. F.	O		402092	Gatehouse, R. O.		
80026	Fulton, A.			793338	Gates, H. B.		
696341	Fulton, E.	+		231747	Gates, R. H.		
808603	Furley, G. F.	X		466184	Gauld, C. S.	O	
105408	Furlong, P.	O		1016556	Gavin, A.		
624173	Furnival, H. H.	O		79224	Gay, A. H.	O	M.M.
424807	Fyle, J.	O		79524	Gayton, L. F.	O	
523441	Gaetz, R. F.	+		2021902	Gear, L. T.		
469868	Gage, I. G.	O		883383	Geary, G. G.	O	
727028	Gale, H.			904643	Geddes, A.		
79772	Gallacher, R.			160065	Geddes, A. C.	O	
231286	Gallagher, W. T.			161103	Geddes, S. A.	O	
231655	Gallaway, D.	O		472198	Gee, A. J.	O	
79925	Gallivan, T.			231719	Gee, B. V.		
184164	Gallon, T.			160236	Gee, C. A.		
809345	Gallop, A. W.	O		696688	Geer, A. C.		
441083	Galloway, H. E.	+		895366	Genge, R. N.		
101545	Galway, J. L.	X		160105	Geoghegan, G. T.	O	
438059	Gammond, C. R.	O		79577	George, D. St. C.	O	
231079	Gander, A.	O		80173	George, W. A.	O	
101029	Ganter, S.			211582	Georgelin, J.	O	
2022094	Garand, J.	O		79449	Germain, W. C.		
222897	Garbutt, G. J.			100707	Gerow, C. H.		
3105485	Gardiner, J.			80075	Gertsch, F.		
80169	Gardiner, Q. E.	X		446460	Gibbs, D.		
809013	Gardiner, R. E.	O X		19477	Gibbs, G. W.	O	
424815	Gardner, T.	+		2022460	Gibbs, W. L.	O	
213912	Garforth, J.	O		2139042	Gibson, C.	O	
79398	Garner, A. L.			883030	Gibson, E. G.	O	
79526	Garner, R. C.			18645	Gibson, W. L.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

477

		M.M.
438862	Gidlow, J. F.	0
79080	Gilbart, A.	0
174580	Gilbert, A.	0
183596	Gilchrist, J.	0
161109	Gilday, W. H.	0
231826	Giles, A.	0
447340	Giles, F. W.	0
183829	Giles, S.	0
2115466	Giltroy, E. S.	0
895131	Gill, C. K.	0
437270	Gill, G. F.	0
201904	Gillard, E. A. H.	0
80268	Gillespie, J. A.	0
696311	Gilles, D.	0
2109873	Gillian, L.	0
79834	Gillison, D.	+
811444	Gilloly, F.	0
101279	Gillrie, W. W.	0
697019	Gilmann, C. I.	0
808809	Gilmore, H. L.	0
101074	Gilmour, E. W.	0
58238	Gilmore, J. H.	0
79837	Gilpin, J. W.	0
606217	Gilpin, J. W.	0
425550	Gilroy, H.	+
101523	Gilroy, J. N.	0
231764	Ginter, E. W.	0
231701	Ginter, W.	0
160118	Gipson, J.	0
624932	Girling, W. E.	0
79838	Gittens, W. A.	+
50467	Given, W. G.	0
696578	Givin, C.	0
690064	Givin, T. S.	0
3207491	Glanville, G. A.	0
808906	Glasscock, G. J.	0
79575	Glasgow, J.	0
79927	Gledhill, G. E.	0
79836	Gleghorn, W.	0
121602	Glogovac, D.	0
79576	Glover, F. H.	0
	Glynn, A. A.	0
	Goad, A. H.	0
	Godeau, O.	0
	79131	Godfrey, A.
	80029	Godfrey, E. C.
	80031	Godfrey, E. C.
	2356048	Godfrey, W.
	446854	Godwin, A. A.
	808698	Godwin, J. G.
	80110	Goeden, E. A. C.
	430264	Goggs, F.
	430205	Goggs, V. E.
	883029	Golding, H.
	696282	Goddie, E. N.
	101058	Golding, R. W.
	3205923	Golis, A.
	433224	Gonge, E. A.
	625126	Good, E. J.
	101426	Good, J. H.
	160727	Gooderham, R.
	446274	Goodhall, E. G.
	808379	Gooding, F.
	832468	Goodwin, M. T.
	802720	Gold, A. H. S.
	2022426	Gordon, D.
	2621820	Gordon, D. M.
	466779	Gordon, I. G.
	883511	Gordon, J. L.
	425553	Gordon, L.
	696330	Gordon, R. Q.
	79136	Gordon, R. T.
	430090	Gordon, W.
	2020809	Goring, J. T.
	79335	Gorton, J. H.
	80028	Goss, T.
	3105920	Gossage, F. B.
	3206828	Gossein, A.
	895526	Goucher, D. W.
	79773	Goucher, W. H.
	809024	Gough, H.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79527	Gough, J. B.	O		79541	Green, R. P. (See also Page-Green)	O	
2138330	Goulet, A.	O		425680	Green, R. R.	O	
472082	Goyer, G.	O		802533	Green, S.	O	
79329	Gow, A.	O		808461	Green, T.	O	
2021793	Gowans, W.	O		231242	Green, T.	O	
928877	Gowdy, A. B.	O		183043	Green, T. E.	O	
231068	Gower, H. R.	+		2283316	Greene, L. G.	O	
809112	Gracey, H. A.	O		463070	Greene, W. A.	O	
467101	Graham, A. E.	O		100872	Greenlees, C.	O	
433896	Graham, F. G.	O		100984	Greenless, W.	O	
79002	Graham, J.	O		79077	Greenough, T.	X	
3105591	Graham, J.	O		231259	Greenway, A.	O	
79086	Graham, J. H.	O		101733	Greer, F. O.	O	
80283	Graham, M.	O		696749	Greer, J. J.	O	
446390	Graham, P. J.	O		79929	Gregalait, C.	O	
101421	Graham, W. G.	O		447757	Gregalait, C.	+	
80149	Graham, W. P.	O		3030675	Gregoriades, G.	O	
79774	Grant, D. K.	X		79319	Gregory, R. H.	O	
434439	Grant, F. J.	O		79835	Gregson, H.	O	
79840	Grant, J.	O		904846	Greig, W.	O	
105900	Grant, J.	O		151712	Grewar, E. A.	O	
184212	Grant, J. F.	O		79133	Grey, W.	O	
79082	Grant, T.	O		79137	Grieve, F.	O	
435291	Grant, W.	O		320645	Grieve, J.	O	
160947	Graves, F. E.	O		261996	Grieve, W.	+	
424845	Grawbarger, G.	X		80091	Grieve, W. H.	O	
238428	Gray, J.	O		79317	Grieve, W. J.	O	
624820	Gray, J. E.	+		860105	Grieve, W. J.	O	
808243	Gray, R.	O		79079	Griffiths, Chas. F.	O	
424844	Gray, S. M.	O		2021882	Griffin, R. H.	O	
183675	Gray, T.	O		79085	Griffith, E.	O	
160051	Gray, W.	O		79400	Griffiths, A.	O	
100960	Grayburn, A.	+		79081	Griffiths, F.	O	
2022216	Greaves, J. W.	O		2109898	Griffiths, H. F.	O	
2021905	Greco, G.	O		79135	Grimble, E.	O	
696827	Green, G. W.	O		100750	Grimes, A. P.	O	
79134	Green, H. V.	O		808436	Groat, J.	O	
696770	Green, H. V.	X		79839	Groat, W.	O	
446795	Green, R. L.	O		79261	Groenier, W.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

479

3206541	Groff, H. R.	O		79090	Hall, L. E.	O	
228102	Groom, E.	O		430263	Hall, W. A.	O	
424853	Gross, H.	A	+	330169	Hall, W. H.		
79083	Groves, A.	I.	+	3206306	Halldorson, G.		
446958	Groves, J.	M.		3206333	Halldorson, J.	O	
80208	Grundy, J. E.			434456	Halliday, D.	O	
80136	Grundy, M.			696923	Hallinan, H.	O	
79076	Gruzelier, C.		+	2020798	Halstead, C. H.		
439100	Gudgeon, T.			3206427	Halvorson, S.		
883015	Gudmundson, S.			808292	Ham, B.		
79525	Guernsey, G. F.			2621841	Ham, M.	O	
4080250	Guest, I.			79264	Hambleton, W.		
466630	Guild, S.	O		467181	Hamblin, H.	W.	
79318	Guillon, S.			691658	Hamilton, D.	W.	O
3206939	Guinn, W.	G.		808576	Hamilton, E.		O
161286	Gullett, C.	F.	O	808876	Hamilton, F.		
79399	Gunning, A.	J.	O	79401	Hamilton, J.		
79930	Gunstone, E.	J.		651048	Hamilton, J.	C.	
184011	Gurney, A.	E.	+	3206886	Hamilton, J.	R.	
79132	Guscott, T.	A.	+	79130	Hamilton, S.		
79087	Gush, E.	W.		2137970	Hamilton, S.	B.	O
704017	Gushue, C.			231472	Hamilton, W.	C.	
202018	Gustafson, O.			2021690	Hamlin, G.		
7931	Guthrie, A.			80086	Hammon, P.	J.	+
446443	Gwilliam, F.		O	183158	Hampton, E.	C.	
895253	Habgood, A.	E.	+	79314	Hancock, C.	F.	
472339	Hackett, J.		O	466004	Hand, C.	H.	O
446388	Hagan, J.			823010	Hanks, C.		
101143	Hagelund, E.			231618	Hanley, J.	R.	O
2138472	Hagenbuck, R.	J.		231522	Hanna, R.	J.	O X
100986	Haggerty, A.		+	435810	Hanna, W.		O O
115378	Haigne, J.	W.		231610	Hanna, W. H.		O O
3207392	Hains, A.	M.		434028	Hannah, H.		O O
808917	Hains, G.	R.	O	161298	Hannah, J.	D.	X
2283317	Hainstock, A.	N.		79127	Hannah, R.	D.	O
80238	Hall, A.	B.	O	80228	Hahnam, H.	C.	
2621822	Hall, B.	A.		79769	Hansen, F.		
434828	Hall, G.			696774	Hanslip, A.	G.	+
320367	Hall, G.	M.	O	3130464	Hanson, E.	E.	+
402112	Hall, J.		O	886163	Hanson, J.	H.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
231248	Hanson, R. O.	O		161022	Hart, W. D.	O
183493	Harbridge, C.	O		225582	Hartree, W. E.	
808401	Harbut, P.	O		79844	Hartschen, W. E.	
50468	Hardie, R. S.	+ O		230432	Harvey, A. E.	+
2355592	Hardman, T.	+ O		696534	Harvey, A. O.	+ O
101263	Hardwick, S.	O		808006	Harvey, E. W.	O
231771	Hardy, J. B.	O		79933	Harvey, G.	
79842	Hardy, L. McK.	+ O		79767	Harvey, J. C.	
79841	Hardy, W.	O		808451	Harvey, T. H. S.	
80036	Hare, T.	O		809192	Harvey, T. H. S.	
5176	Hargreaves, G.	O		80161	Harvey, W. E.	O
701280	Hargreaves, W.	+ O		79267	Haslam, J. M.	+ O
79222	Harlock, E.	O		522847	Hastings, D. F.	O
696220	Harmon, W.	+ O		402525	Hastings, D. W.	O
895336	Harris, M.	O		446383	Hatchiffe, G.	
79128	Harris, E. C.	O		2020878	Haugen, N.	O
3206903	Harrigan, W. J.	O		446189	Haw, M.	O
2138869	Harrington, A. G.	O		79330	Hawker, H.	O
2022463	Harrington, W. H.	O		2355511	Hawkes, L. W. F.	O
79768	Harris, C. A.	O		3205658	Hawkins, A. S.	O
79932	Harris, G.	O		2022464	Hawkins, E.	
47371	Harris, H. T.	+ O		231604	Hawkins, E. A.	O
895409	Harris, J.	O		808126	Hawkins, H.	O
430196	Harris, L. G.	+ O	M.M.	231106	Hawkins, K. J.	O
79313	Harris, M. W.	O		79934	Hawkins, T.	O
79006	Harris, N.	O		446697	Hawkins, W. H.	+ O
424884	Harris, R. N.	+ O		100318	Haworth, R. E.	O
80202	Harris, W. P.	O		696430	Hawthorne, A. J. G.	O
89231	Harrison, D.	O	M.M.	80034	Haxton, J.	O
160734	Harrison, F.	O		696520	Hay, F. R.	O
2138029	Harrison, I.	O		895322	Hay, J. A.	
696472	Harrison, J. W.	O		100400	Hay, S. L.	O
3206654	Harrison, R. W.	O		446097	Hayden, G. S.	
310465	Harrison, W. T.	O		446576	Hayden, J. L.	O
424626	Harrod, J. E.	O	M.M.	115512	Hayes, R. J.	O
446821	Harrow, T.	O	M.M.	808577	Hayward, H. B.	O
231762	Harrow, W. F.	O		525474	Haywood, A.	
79331	Hart, A. W.	O		79455	Hazel, F.	O
79406	Hart, H.	O		883532	Hazelton, J. D.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

481

79581	Hazlett, J.	O	O	O
424895	Head, I.	O	O	O
79938	Heaney, R.	O	O	O
430322	Heard, H. H.	O	O	O
80038	Heaslip, R. R.	O	O	O
883440	Heath, F. C.	+	+	M.M.
663096	Heath, H.	O	O	O
424896	Heather, C.	O	O	O
80171	Heather, L.	O	O	O
100783	Heaton, E.	O	O	O
79937	Heberden, H. W.	O	O	O
3131384	Hebert, A. J.	O	O	O
189781	Hector, J. N.	O	O	O
3204429	Heenan, J. A.	O	O	O
80187	Hefferman, A.	O	O	O
3131375	Hefferman, E. J.	+	+	O
883513	Helem, W. R.	+	+	O
79089	Hellawell, F. C.	O	O	O
146376	Hellawell, Thos.	+	+	O
446386	Hemmings, W. J.	O	O	O
183500	Henus, H. C.	O	O	O
808509	Henderson, A.	O	O	O
80135	Henderson, G.	O	O	O
240111	Henderson, H. V.	O	O	O
425560	Henderson, I. G.	O	O	O
800349	Henderson, T.	O	O	O
79312	Henderson, Wm.	O	O	O
850850	Henfrey, A.	O	O	O
696089	Henkel, G. W.	O	O	O
2021729	Hepburn, J.	O	O	O
687000	Herbert, F. J.	O	O	O
3206918	Herbrand, H. N.	O	O	O
883225	Hermanson, A.	+	+	O
79843	Heron, R.	O	O	O
3205749	Hermiston, C.	O	O	O
696207	Hermann, G.	O	O	O
80092	Hester, H. H.	O	O	O
252088	Hetherington, P.	O	O	O
80160	Hewitt, A. J.	+	+	O
79847	Hewitt, I. G.	O	O	O
80037	Hoare, D.	O	O	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79005	Hobbs, A. P.	O		79126	Honour, J.	O
100811	Hobden, (Fr.) J.	O		808242	Hood, F.	O
736975	Hobson, J.	O		808241	Hood, R.	O
883189	Hockey, J. A.	O		808097	Hood, T.	O
883048	Hodge, C. F.	O		80153	Hood, W. F.	O
235559	Hodge, R. F.	+ O		802405	Hook, F. J.	O
467017	Hodge, W.	+ O		160465	Hooks, C.	O
424923	Hodges, C. M.	O		2109897	Hooper, C. V.	O
79584	Hodges, F. G.	O		80237	Hooten, W.	O
117705	Hodges, H. G.	O		808112	Hope, C.	O
79223	Hodges, R. F.	O		79939	Hope, W.	O
3131616	Hodgins, R.	O		700669	Hopgood, C. B.	O
883805	Hodgkins, J. W.	O		79007	Hopkins, B.	O
79582	Hodgson, C.	O		2115083	Hopkins, L. B.	O
80177	Hodgson, H.	O		795380	Hopkins, S. H.	O
215004	Hodgson, J. R.	O		79092	Hopkins, W.	O
183872	Hodson, N.	O		3206531	Hopkins, W. B.	O
79770	Hoerder, M.	O		3205888	Hopping, S.	O
435827	Hogarth, P.	O		696371	Horne, F. E.	O
435464	Hogg, T.	O		79583	Horne, J.	O
115425	Holborn, C. S.	O		696941	Hornett, A. E.	O
736010	Holder, J. G.	+ O		100714	Horrock, R.	O
809082	Holgate, A. B.	O		79405	Horsburgh, R.	O
809068	Holgate, H. R.	O		435344	Horsman, W. E.	O
430939	Holland, W.	O		79771	Horton, J.	O
160533	Holliday, E. W.	O		160144	Horwell, H.	O
883545	Hollinshead, J. L.	O	M.M.	160949	Horwood, A. H.	O
80121	Hollyfield, V.	O		3206842	Hostad, O. J.	O
696292	Holm, H.	O		430116	Houghton, P. B.	O
809189	Holmes, A.	O		760714	Houston, W. B.	O
466520	Holmes, A.	O		883063	Houston, C.	O
79265	Holmes, A. H.	O	M.M. and bar	47558	Howard, C. M. B.	O
184126	Holmes, A. H.	O		435408	Howard, G. T.	O
100754	Holmes, E. J.	O		183879	Howard, H. C.	O
883428	Holmes, F. H. F.	O		883118	Howard, I.	O
79579	Holmes, J. A.	O		75279	Howard, J.	O
434600	Holms, G. W.	O		80033	Howard, R.	O
895124	Holstead, T.	O		79404	Howell, H.	O
160351	Holt, C. W. K.	O		811959	Howey, R. G.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

483

		M.M.
100276	Hovey, W. G.	O
467169	Hoyt, R. H.	O
808949	Herrier, F.	O
466006	Hucklesbee, L.	M.M.
424941	Huddlestone, A. H.	O
696022	Hudson, W. F.	O
696003	Hughes, A. B. A.	O
231792	Hughes, A. J.	O
1084031	Hughes, F. S.	O
696526	Hughes, J.	+
808644	Hughes, L.	+
3207309	Hughes, R.	O
908190	Hughes, R.	O
808477	Hughes, R.	O
80032	Hughes, R. P.	O
101165	Hughes, W.	O
433589	Hughson, F. A. S.	O
184486	Hughson, H. E.	+
2621857	Hugo, J. V.	O
101425	Huguet, E. R.	M.M.
2621907	Hulett, E. L.	O
198885	Hulmes, E.	O
231431	Humphreys, R. C.	+
80035	Hunking, S. C.	+
115569	Hunt, C. J.	+
161287	Hunt, G. S.	++
115660	Hunt, L. W.	O
695559	Hunt, T. E.	O
3103568	Hunt, T. H.	O
446126	Hunt, W. J.	O
430071	Hunter, A. R.	O
802288	Hunter, E.	O
183977	Hunter, H. J.	O
174609	Hunter, I.	+
231181	Hunter, J.	O
696703	Hunter, J.	I.
33117053	Hurley, J. M.	O
33117054	Hurley, J. M.	O
809084	Hurt, W.	O
183623	Hurt, W.	O
	Hushagen, A. J.	O
	Hushagen, A. O.	O
	Huston, J.	O
	Hutchings, P.	O
	Hutchinson, J.	O
	Hutchinson, H.	O
	Hutchinson, R.	O
	Hutt, L.	O
	Hutton, C. P. R.	+
	Hutton, F. L.	O
	Hutton, F.	O
	Hutton, I.	O
	Hutton, T.	O
	Huxley, E.	O
	Huxley, F. R.	O
	Hyde, C.	O
	Ibbetson, W. T.	O
	Impey, E.	O
	Inrie, W. I.	O
	Ings, J.	O
	Ingram, J. J.	O
	Inkpen, A.	O
	Inkster, A. F. R.	O
	Inkster, J. C.	O
	Innes, A.	O
	Innes, D. M.	O
	Innes, F.	O
	Innes, R. C.	O
	Ireland, C. H.	O
	Irvin, E.	O
	Irvin, R. C.	O
	Irvin, A.	O
	Irvin, W. J.	O
	Irwin, C. F.	O
	Irwin, I. H.	O
	Irwin, W. H.	O
	Isaac, J. S.	O
	Isaac, J. T.	O
	Ivens, C. I.	O
	Ivey, P. H.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.			CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
101060	Jackson, R.	+ +				622245	Jerry, G. F. O
703977	Jacks, G. E.	O	D.C.M., Russ. Cr. St. G.			79308	Jewell, G. A. O
79311	Jackson, A. H.	O				101649	Jobel, E. +
1018605	Jackson, A. K.					79456	Jobling, E. S. O
2621806	Jackson, D. R.	+ +				2621847	Johns, H. O
160715	Jackson, E. J.	+ +				79094	Johns, E. H. O
2109847	Jackson, E. L.	O				447625	Johns, W. C. O
79310	Jackson, F. W.					101528	Johnson, A. A. +
808016	Jackson, F. W.					808788	Johnson, A. A. O
696718	Jackson, G. R. E.	+ +				808131	Johnson, C. O
696835	Jackson, J. H.	O				466615	Johnson, C. A. O
2621860	Jackson, R. G.	O				696103	Johnson, C. E. +
3206094	Jackson, R. G.	O				696646	Johnson, C. E. O
115522	Jackson, W. H.	O				808655	Johnson, C. P. O
79385	Jackson, W. H.	O				79093	Johnson, C. S. O
3205742	Jackson, W. E.	O				3205929	Johnson, C. T. O
6966018	Jackson, W. H.	O				79763	Johnson, E. L. O
80041	Jacobs, A. C.	O				79220	Johnson, F. E. O
160978	James, F.	O				736479	Johnson, F. M. +
434112	James, F.	X X				79408	Johnson, G. O
434315	James, F. V.	+ +				430267	Johnson, J. F. O
101317	Janes, I.	O				808787	Johnson, J. E. O
2138222	Janes, J. F.	O				101234	Johnson, N. O
79766	Janes, O.	O				895149	Johnson, N. +
101271	Janes, W.	O				101127	Johnson, P. +
430307	Janes, W. H.	O				808670	Johnson, R. E. O
100733	Jamieson, F.	O				160608	Johnson, R. M. O
115591	Jamieson, H.	O				160170	Johnson, A. O
80937	Jamieson, H. F.	O				3206121	Johnson, B. W. O
430069	Jardine, A. M.	O				3206194	Johnson, F. O
883278	Jarvis, W. S.	O	M.M.			808439	Johnson, H. O
2621824	Jay, I.	O				883342	Johnson, H. C. O
709242	Jaynes, L.	O				446594	Johnson, H. W. O
3205721	Jenkin, A. G.	O				700570	Johnson, J. M. O
80231	Jenkins, W.	O				3206666	Johnson, J. N. O
3206288	Jennison, A. H.	O				79588	Johnson, J. N. +
2109833	Jenson, F.	O				447689	Johnson, S. H. O
79586	Jenssen, J.	O				696168	Johnson, W. A. O
						424966	Johnson, W. H. O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
3206691	Kennedy, M. J.	O		2311189	Kinsella, W. W.	+	
2358222	Kennedy, N. P.	O		3205826	Kirk, A. W.		
80113	Kennedy, T.	O		811540	Kirk, J.	O	
808047	Kennett, J.	O		79214	Kirkman, C. F.	+	
79410	Kenny, F. A.	O		79212	Kirkman, J. W. P.		
3207348	Kenny, L. C.	O		2311189	Kirkton, C. J.		
883606	Kent, H. D.	O		79334	Kiuwan, G. I.	O	
79589	Keworth, J. L.	X		2621881	Kittrell, W. G.	O	
895345	Kerley, S. W.	X		3131273	Klein, L. J.	O	
79096	Kerr, A.	O	M.M.	7072209	Knapp, H. H.	O	
654389	Kerr, A. D.	O		101097	Knee, L.		
430394	Kerr, A. R.	O		184048	Knight, H. W.	O	
808161	Kerr, C. L.	O		434975	Knott, W.	O	
883623	Kerr, C. R.	O		424995	Knowle, T.	O	
160713	Kerr, I. T.	O	M.M.	1072209	Knowles, R. S.	O	
80203	Kerr, Wm. Collins	O		195119	Knox, A.	O	
811605	Kew, M.	O		3207642	Knudtson, A. N.		
79213	Keyes, W. E. G.	O		424997	Koloniec, A.		
79333	Kidd, F. W.	O		898405	Korchuk, J.		
808798	Kidd, J.	O		808590	Korneychuk, M. S.	O	Russ Cr St. G.
160539	Kidd, J. A.	O		696262	Kraft, J.	O	
811456	Kidd, W.	O	+	3131636	Krieg, J. E.	O	
79215	Kierman, B.	O		3205376	Kroll, F.	O	
79272	Kilford, A. R.	O		883591	Kruger, C.	O	
231178	Killins, V. A.	O		696503	Kunz, C.	O	
808470	Kilner, J.	O		2114894	Labet, T.	O	
696247	Kimball, J.	O		2621968	LaBrie, L. G.		
79216	King, F. J.	O		115897	Lacell, H.		
3205597	King, F. W.	O		4255372	Lacharity, A.		
624827	King, G.	O	+	3131404	Lacroix, L.		
436711	King, G. R.	O		2529399	LaFontaine, O.		
80212	King, H.	O	X	3131406	LaForet, E. D.		
811569	King, H. R.	O		437992	Lafrance, A.		
79409	King, J.	O		811795	Lafranier, G. A.		
79762	King, J. H.	O		4100728	Lagace, A.		
2528444	King, P. E.	O		2005451	Lagrue, J.		
80109	King, W. N.	O	+	3130258	Laddaw, J.	O	
183802	Kinnear, G. W.	O	+	811281	Laddaw, J.	O	
696947	Kinnington, G. McI.	O		3130259	Laddaw, J.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

497

3131643	Lawrence, D. D.	O
79851	Lawrence, E. J.	O
79851	Lawrence, F. J.	O
79851	Lawrence, J. F.	O
2529391	Lawrence, K.	O
2529391	Lawrie, T. B.	O
2529391	Lawrie, T. B.	O
80103	Lawson, W. J.	O
79701	Layton, W. D.	O
455231	Leach, G. I.	O
696493	Leach, J.	O
206283	Leach, T.	O
808824	Leadbeater, G.	O
80232	Leadbeater, G. F.	O
2288307	Leader, F. B.	O
737220	Leaher, W. P.	O
3330737	Leammon, P. D.	O
435263	Learned, B. C.	O
216099	LeClaire, F.	O
3205267	Ledwich, G. L. F.	O
79208	Lee, A.	O
231400	Lee, D.	O
231765	Lee, E.	O
425713	Lee, E. R.	O
79211	Lee, J. F.	O
183336	Lee, J. P.	O
79099	Lee, R. J.	O
3206074	Lee, S.	O
3131414	Leeder, H. N.	O
100658	Leenan, F. S.	O
82034	Leeman, T. S.	O
408137	Leftwich, H. J.	O
812128	Legay, T.	O
186687	Lerge, T. N.	O
803225	Leit, W. R.	O
79853	Leish, H. L.	O
185335	Leitch, J.	O
808772	Leman, A.	O
696150	LeMasurier, H. F.	O
101737	Lemaitre, P.	O
2458326	Latham, C. J.	O
2458326	Latham, G. J.	O
473218	Latter, E. B.	O
425727	Laurence, W.	O
446910	Laurie, A. J.	O
425910	Laurie, A. J.	O
115762	Lawrence, J.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER	NAME	CASUALTIES	AWARDS	NUMBER	NAME	CASUALTIES	AWARDS
80225	Lemon, L. J.	O		79302	Linwood, C.	O	
231719	Leng, S.	O	N.M.	100102	Lissenden, G.	E.	O
231518	Lent, L. L.	O		257236	Lister, A.		X
3205340	Lenz, N.	O		466504	Lister, T.		
446770	Lenzie, L. G.	O		3205142	Litchfield, A.		
100062	Lealie, J.	O		467088	Lithgow, H. G.	O	
3131011	Leslie, W. H.	O		218731	Little, E. E.	O	
231183	Leslie, W. L.	O		467025	Little, J. C.	O	
79337	Lester, J.	O		2115837	Little, W. C.	O	
258616	Letendre, J.	O		231626	Littlewood, W. F. C.	O	
808315	Lethbridge, W. J.	O		80042	Livesey, R.	O	
231571	LeFlau, R.	O		696552	Livingston, S. W.	O	
161055	Lewick, F. H.	O		3130512	Livingston, E. S.	O	
79304	Levis, A.	O		402344	Llewellyn, J.	O +	M.M.
161021	Lewis, A. J.	O	M.M.	79098	Lloyd, A.		
183697	Lewis, H.	O		101281	Lloyd, C.	+ O X	
883422	Lewis, I.	O		466372	Lloyd, E. T.	O +	
3131648	Lewis, I. V.	O		79305	Lloyd, J. O.	O +	
183389	Lewis, K. B.	O		100268	Lloyd, P.		
523284	Lewis, W. R.	O		79209	Lloyd, W. E.		
3205625	Lewthwaite, C. A.	X		808065	Loader, W. J.		D.C.M.
408359	Leyland, H.	O		231325	Lobban, F. A.		
2355331	Leyland, J.	O		809054	Loblaw, T.	O +	
136486	Lefchis, P.	O		808239	Lockhead, C. H.	X	M.M.
231461	Liggins, R. T.	O X		808238	Lockhead, J. V.	O	
447404	Light, A. N.	O +		2622018	Loch, C. A.		
2622023	Lightfoot, R.	O		506292	Lock, F. C.	+ O	
625334	Lightle, A. I.	O +		704112	Lock, G. F.		
79010	Lillywhite, H. V.	O		523426	Lock, J.		
435816	Limoges, P.	O		160124	Lock, W.	O	
3206779	Limoges, P.	O		3130744	Locke, J.		
2109904	Lind, A.	O +		696257	Lockey, J.	+ O	
160359	Lindsay, A.	O		811619	Logan, P.		
446273	Lindsay, J.	O		115136	Logan, S. B.	+ O	
80220	Linn, C.	O		434432	Logan, T.	O	
696492	Linnen, G. A.	O		79854	Loggin, A. N.	O	
425331	Lintick, J. R.	O		809132	Lomax, G.		
425332	Lintick, L.	O		809182	Lomax, J.		
79336	Linton, D.	O		809133	Lomax, W.		

M. in D.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

489

79852	Longhurst, J.	O	696037	Lykeard, W. E. U.	O
3207330	Longmore, J.	O	79210	Lynde, J. N.	O
3130267	Loomis, S. A.	X	79249	Lyness, W.	O
898510	Loski, A.		231479	Lynn, R.	O
3205202	Lott, R. C.	O	80128	Lyon, I. H.	
80106	Loucks, K. S.	O	3206943	Lyons, A.	
71703	Loucks, R. H. D.	O	79749	MacAdam, F.	
79530	Loucks, S.	+	79191	MacAldin, T. G.	
79301	Loughborough, E.	+	100448	McAlister, A. J.	+
258814	Lounsherry, M. C.		.231666	McAllister, R. S.	+
2621848	Loutlook, P.	O	79355	McAlpine, J. M.	O
231381	Louttit, T.	O	80150	MacArthur, D. C. F.	M.M.
183160	Love, G.	O	696675	MacArthur, H.	M.M.
330517	Lovergrove, F. I.	O	101099	MacArthur, J.	
696820	Loveland, C. V.	X	2115225	MacArthur, J.	
79009	Lovel, L.	+	436938	McBain, A.	
183620	Lovell, T.		184028	McBain, W.	
696222	Lovette, W. S.	M.M.	696897	MacBean, F. A.	+
79250	Loverock, F.		7943	MacBeth, F.	+
231316	Low, C. T.	+	79596	McBlaine, A. E.	O
2109931	Low, F. H.		100040	McCarthy, C.	O
79855	Lowden, R. S.		101038	McCarthy, G.	O
79447	Lowe, N. G.	O	79535	McCaffrey, F. H.	
447125	Lowe, T. A.	O	79111	McCullum, D.	
2611935	Lowe, W.	O	80216	McCann, J.	
422654	Lowes, R. P.		435009	McCann, S. A.	O
160687	Lwendes, E. B.		80193	McCartney, C.	O
5178	Lwendes, M. M.		808432	McCaskie, A. A.	O
234466	Lowry, H. H.	O	809118	McCaskie, R.	O
808549	Lowry, T. E.	O	3206528	McCauley, C. A. E.	
606936	Lowther, A. L.	O	80082	McCauley, E. M.	
3130270	Lucier, W.	O	696083	McCauley, F. H.	O
3131652	Luckins, A. E.	O	79537	McCleary, W.	+
811236	Luff, G.	O	3205075	McClelland, R.	
79684	Luke, G. A.	O	447144	McClintick, W. R.	O
80090	Luke, J. C.		100196	McClintonck, J.	O
231412	Lumb, E.	M.M.	79865	McCloy, James	
3131653	Lumley, F. N.	O	1066074	McClung, J. E.	+
79251	Luther, S. J. M.	O	425121	McColl, G. H.	
467056	Luxton, H. M.	+	696978	McCull, M. B.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER	NAME	CASUALTIES	AWARDS	NAME	CASUALTIES	AWARDS
						M.S.M., M. in D.
226289	McComb, A. L.	O	O	MacDonald, J. A.	79751	MacDonald, J.
434297	McCombe, A.	O	O	MacDonald, J. A.	3203961	MacDonald, J. A.
79114	McConnell, J.	O	O	MacDonald, J. A.	231652	MacDonald, J. A.
454369	McConnell, L.	O	O	MacDonald, J. C. G.	696312	MacDonald, J. C. G.
883491	McCool, W. H.	O	O	MacDonald, J. E.	3131668	MacDonald, J. E.
1263761	McCord, V.	O	O	MacDonald, J. R.	883777	MacDonald, J. R.
183763	MacCormick, D.	O	O	MacDonald, K.	808438	MacDonald, K.
425122	MacCormick, R. S.	O	O	MacDonald, N. J.	808352	MacDonald, N. J.
811336	MacCormick, T.	O	M.M.	MacDonald, N. J.	115779	MacDonald, N. J.
231102	McCowan, J. W.	O	O	MacDonald, O. B.	3207638	MacDonald, O. B.
808389	McCracken, J.	O	O	MacDonald, R.	79748	MacDonald, R.
435179	McCracken, W.	O	O	MacDonald, V.	809079	MacDonald, V.
175024	McCreedy, S. L.	O	O	McDonough, E. A.	101574	McDonough, E. A.
454016	McCreedy, H.	O	O	McDougall, C. F.	446473	McDougall, C. F.
3130329	McCreery, A. N.	O	M.M.	McDougall, M.	3205348	McDougall, M.
79422	McCulloch, A.	O	O	McDougall, M.	811929	McDougall, M.
79151	McCulloch, J. A.	O	O	McDowall, D.	435438	McDowall, D.
43524	McCulloch, T.	O	O	McDowell, E.	101678	McDowell, E.
231657	McCullough, W. J.	O	O	McDowell, R. W.	79554	McDowell, R. W.
435127	McCullough, J.	O	O	McEachern, D.	447142	McEachern, D.
105684	McCutcheon, S. C.	O	O	McEwan, J.	80186	McEwan, J.
231708	McDarmain, D. D.	O	O	McFadden, R. R.	652161	McFadden, R. R.
435118	MacDonald, A.	O	O	McFadyen, D.	808110	McFadyen, D.
425586	MacDonald, A. R.	O	O	McFarlane, J.	101557	McFarlane, J.
160211	MacDonald, A.	O	X	MacFarland, J. E.	80139	MacFarland, J. E.
3207508	McDonald, A.	O	O	McGarrachie, A.	79192	McGarrachie, A.
100838	McDonald, A.	O	O	McFarlan, A. R.	160364	McFarlan, A. R.
401283	McDonald, A. P.	O	O	McGhee, A.	430352	McGhee, A.
79424	McDonald, A. S.	O	O	McFarlane, J.	225101	McFarlane, J.
231034	MacDonald, B. A.	O	O	MacFarland, J. E.	80104	MacFarland, J. E.
101630	Macdonald, C. A.	O	O	McGarry, S.	1833567	McGarry, S.
3205619	McDonald, D.	O	O	McFarlan, A. R.	1033396	McFarlan, A. R.
145205	McDonald, D. R.	O	O	McGingley, J.	503489	McGingley, J.
231100	McDonald, E.	O	O	McGlashon, G.	1980	McGlashon, G.
183628	McDonald, F. C.	O	O	McConigal, V.	466637	McConigal, V.
421374	McDonald, H.	O	O	MacGregor, A. D.	231756	MacGregor, A. D.
3205878	McDonald, H. A.	O	O	MacGregor, A. R.	79120	MacGregor, A. R.
184023	McDonald, J.	O	O	MacGregor, W.	800413	MacGregor, W.
160173	Macdonald, J.	O	O			

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
160225	McLean, T.	.....	M. M.	183513	McNieve, E.	.....
425148	McLean, W.	+	M. M.	435593	McNinch, S.	.....
795336	McLennan, K.	.....	✖	183646	McNiven, J.	.....
160560	McLennan, N.	.....	O	79109	McPhee, D.	.....
79110	McLeod, Donald	✖	O	809158	MacPhée, K.	.....
79119	McLeod, Donald	O	D.C.M.	447135	MacPherson, C. J.	.....
79421	McLeod, D. A.	.....	M. M.	100677	MacPherson, G.	.....
430126	McLeod, F.	.....	O	434297	MacPherson, J.	.....
434227	McLeod, J. A.	.....	O	434195	MacPherson, J.	.....
3205450	McLeod, J. S.	.....	O	472359	McQuade, W.	.....
183544	MacLeod, N.	.....	O	800444	McRae, J.	.....
2138758	MacLeod, N.	✖	O	79113	MacRae, D.	+
808520	MacLeod, R.	.....	✖	624665	MacRae, N.	.....
811443	McMaster, H.	✖	.....	401102	McSkinnings, C.	.....
79190	McMaster, W. J.	.....	O	100770	MacSween, D. A.	.....
811182	McMenomy, N.	.....	O	883148	McTaggart, G. A.	.....
183592	McMichael, C. G.	.....	.....	3130302	McTavish, S.	.....
698826	McMillan, A.	.....	O	446929	McWalker, J.	✖
160652	McMillan, A. G.	.....	+	446482	McWhinney, D.	.....
2355678	McMillan, A. M.	.....	O	808495	McWilliams, H. L.	.....
79750	McMillan, I.	.....	O	446223	McWilliams, J.	+
811430	McMillan, W.	.....	M. M.	79944	Mabon, J.	.....
446480	McMullen, C. C.	.....	O	79751	Macdonald, J.	.....
893349	McMurchie, J.	.....	M. M.	231818	Mace, T. B.	.....
808921	McMurtry, R. F.	+	+	184225	Mack, H.	.....
79420	McNab, D.	.....	O	400024	Mack, W. R.	.....
696420	McNabb, M. C.	+	.....	446920	Mackintosh, D. A.	.....
160696	McNabb, R. C.	.....	O	72298	Mackintosh, W. G. C.	.....
80077	McNair, A.	.....	+	50469	Macqualter, G. P.	.....
404904	McNally, C. W.	.....	O	100483	Madden, E.	.....
883265	McNaughton, L. B.	.....	O	79417	Maddocks, D.	.....
2330433	McNeil, D. J.	+	.....	3206925	Madge, A. J.	.....
231268	MacNeil, F. T.	.....	✖	79201	Madge, F. H.	.....
183914	MacNeil, J.	.....	O	79860	Maes, L. C.	.....
323674	MacNeil, J.	.....	.....	183529	Maguire, J.	.....
3207470	MacNeil, K.	.....	.....	809130	Mahoney, A. T.	+
101326	MacNeill, A. A.	.....	O	2528331	Mahoney, E. J.	O X
79747	McNeil, N. T.	.....	.....	811555	Mail, H. B.	.....

31ST BATTALION, C.E.F.

493

79199	Mainwaring, H. G.	O	Marshall, E. D.	
447826	Maisey, W.	O	Marshall, F. D.	
3130518	Maisonville, A. N.	O	Marshall, H. A.	
160726	Maitland, G. R. A	O	Marshall, J.	O
231712	Major, C. R.	+	Marshall, J. H.	
79354	Makin, R.	O	Marshall, J. T.	
3206033	Malcolm, D.	O	Marshall, R. E.	O
80274	Malcolmson, R. C.	O	Marskill, E.	
696766	Maley, H.	O	Marten, P. B.	O
79205	Malliot, J. A.	O	Marten, P. W.	
100323	Mallec, J.	O	Martin, C. W.	
3131657	Malley, J. L.	O	Martin, E. G.	
79945	Mallory, H.	+	Martin, G.	M.M.
696246	Malone, J. V.	O	Martin, G. H.	
3131376	Malott, J. G.	O	Martin, R. S.	M.M.
895150	Manley, A. C.	O	Martin, S.	
808888	Manley, W. J.	O	Martin, T.	
79196	Mann, A. A.	O	Martin, W. P.	O
446178	Mann, A. J.	O	Martins, J. W.	O
3131285	Mann, J. A.	O	Martyn, J. C.	O
101251	Mann, L.	O	Martyn, E. J.	O
79197	Manning, C. B.	O	Mason, H. F.	
3105618	Mannix, J. C.	O	Mason, H. F.	O
183577	Manville, A. D.	O	Massey, S.	O
80118	Mapstone, W.	O	Mathers, J.	
79946	March, W.	O	Matheron, N.	
696566	Marchant, I. M.	O	Matheron, W. J.	O
79105	Mardon, C. H.	O	Matthews, C. B.	M.M.
79299	Margach, D. H.	O	Matthews, T. M.	
80115	Marlor, L. W.	O	Matiak, A.	
80003	Marmont, V. W.	O	Matsos, W.	
895506	Marquis, G.	O	Matthews, A. A.	
446580	Marr, G.	O	Matthews, A. H.	
2621809	Marr, R.	O	Matthews, A. H.	
80275	Marr, W. M.	O	Matthews, A. H.	
42054	Marsh, G.	O	Matthews, G. H.	
446897	Marsh, G.	O	Matthews, H. C.	
446526	Marsh, W. J.	O	Matthews, H. J.	
2115473	Marshall, A. A.	O	Matthews, J.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
186641	Mawson, E. W.	O		79250	Miles, R. D.	O	
183433	Maxey, J. W. D.	O		446665	Mill, H. M.	O	
696833	Mayes, H. A.	O		160444	Millard, L.	O	
2356248	Mayhew, W.	+		436729	Miller, A.	O	
252447	Maynard, C. C.	M.M. and bar		183437	Miller, A.	O	
101266	Mayne, B.	O		150175	Miller, A. J.	O	
231726	Mayne, J.	O		435195	Miller, A. T.	O	
183576	Meaden, D. M.	O		446876	Miller, E.	X	
425072	Mealing, W. J.	O		183480	Miller, E. I.	O	
79758	Mearns, J.	+		252953	Miller, G.	O	
3105860	Mearns, J.	O		426494	Miller, H. S.	O	
3206428	Mears, J.	O		80285	Miller, J.	M.M.	
883217	Medley, E. F.	O		200032	Miller, J. R.	O	
183666	Meechan, P.	O		80048	Miller, J. S.	O	
529238	Meers, A.	+		231267	Miller, S. W.	O	
79011	Mekle, J.	O		469789	Millet, H. G.	O	
184249	Mellows, J.	O		446414	Mills, A. J.	O	
112256	Meloche, A.	O		313291	Mills, C. R.	X	
20220	Melville, N.	O		313292	Mills, J. S.	O	
467069	Melville, W. M.	O		313293	Mills, P. E.	O	
446966	Melvin, A.	+		798558	Milne, A. W.	O	
79300	Menk, C.	O		473022	Milne, J. W.	X	
161087	Menzies, H. G.	O		801162	Milne, W.	O	
811943	Merrick, H.	O		696169	Milnes, H.	X	
79593	Messick, C. F.	O	M.M.	794119	Milton, E.	O	
79948	Metcalf, A.	O		425734	Mindofik, S.	O	
883027	Metcalif, J. H.	O		3130522	Mintz, G. F.	O	
3207378	Metcalfe, T.	O		3205169	Niquelon, P.	O	
2621840	Metters, L.	+		79996	Mitchell, Allan	O	
696617	Mewton, L. J. M.	X		800080	Mitchell, Amos	O	
80047	Michie, W.	O		811986	Mitchell, C.	O	
425078	Middleditch, A. J. W.	O		115632	Mitchell, D.	O	
425079	Middleditch, H. W.	O		461094	Mitchell, D.	O	
696404	Middlemiss, J.	O		427687	Mitchell, F.	W.	
696609	Middleton, W. G.	O		80234	Mitchell, J.	O	
2109940	Middlewick, W. J.	O		808677	Mitchell, J. G.	O	
3130275	Mifflin, O. C.	O		426361	Mitchell, J. S.	O	
883205	Milburn, W. J.	O		466201	Mitchell, O.	O	
79255	Miles, A. D.	O					

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

195

			M.M.
696735	Mitchell, P.	O	O
696990	Mitchell, W.	X	O
430600	Mitchell, W.	O	+
301655	Mitchell, W. B.	O	O
625141	Mitchinson, J.	O	O
79414	Mocalis, L.	O	O
886560	Moffatt, J. W.	O	O
760597	Moffatt, B. H.	O	O
3131295	Moir, D. N.	O	O
437142	Moir, J. D.	O	O
79256	Mole, W.	O	O
3130284	Monney, J. J.	O	O
79753	Monck, G.	O	O
79102	Moncrieff, A.	O	O
79856	Moncton, C.	O	O
80209	Monk, B. E. L.	O	O
80218	Monkman, J. P.	O	O
883745	Montague, C.	O	O
79351	Montague, J. E.	O	O
79198	Montgomery, D. K.	O	O
426726	Montgomery, H. G.	O	O
79107	Montgomery, W. C.	O	O
883026	Moody, W. T.	O	O
904003	Moore, F. W.	X	O
523383	Mooney, C. A.	X	O
231565	Mooney, P. E.	X	O
183496	Mooney, R. E.	X	O
408157	Mooney, W. I.	X	O
447521	Moore, A. S.	++	O
79352	Moore, A. S.	++	O
79202	Moore, Chas. E.	O	O
79451	Moore, E. H.	O	O
79756	Moore, F. B.	O	O
3205082	Moore, G. F.	O	O
2622960	Moore, H. E.	O	O
174879	Moore, J. C.	O	O
231042	Moore, J. C.	O	O
883735	Moore, J. F.	O	O
	231233	Moore, L. C.	O
	♦ 895305	Moore, N. A.	O
	79859	Moore, P. J.	+
	3206196	Moore, T.	O
	79592	Moore, W. A. H	O
	809632	Moore, W. F.	O
	79412	Moorhead, G.	O
	238755	Moorehouse, H.	O
	2355909	Moran, T. T.	O
	3206893	Moren, V.	O
	808909	Morgan, C. M.	O
	883020	Morgan, G. T.	O
	80083	Morgan, H. W.	O
	101437	Moren, A.	O
	883129	Morrison, G. J.	O
	115675	Moreland, F. J.	O
	2138925	Morley, A.	O
	883445	Morley, C.	O
	434926	Morley, H. E.	O
	79861	Morley, J.	O
	184229	Morrell, G.	O
	2621947	Morrieau, A.	O
	447161	Morris, A.	O
	79418	Morris, A. B.	O
	226450	Morris, A. D.	O
	425099	Morris, A. T.	O
	446989	Morris, C. E.	O
	435766	Morris, C. P. S.	O
	79950	Morris, D.	O
	101754	Morris, H.	O
	425100	Morris, H. B.	O
	80211	Morris, H. L.	O
	696100	Morris, H. R.	O
	808761	Morris, H. W.	O
	3130324	Morris, J. P.	O
	79104	Morris, M.	O
	808061	Morris, P.	O
	3206247	Morris, S. W.	O
	425101	Morris, S. W. P.	O
	2109823	Morrison, A. D.	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
3205655	Morrison, A. R.	O		811603	Murray, H.	O	
3205362	Morrison, D.	O		431099	Murray, J.	O	
460787	Morrison, D. A.	O		3105269	Murray, J.	O	
811172	Morrison, H. B.	+		808066	Murray, J.	H	
184165	Morrison, J. J.	O		696857	Murray, J.	H	
216479	Morrison, J. N.	O		/79413	Murray, J.	S	
931849	Morrison, M.	O		79757	Murray, L.	O	
808481	Morris, P.	O		101099	Murray, R.	O	M.M.
231155	Morrow, H. II	O		160054	Murray, R. H.	O	
183222	Mortimer, A.	+		79532	Murray, S.	O	
883521	Mortimer, C. S.	O		79499	Murrell, A. G.	O	
3207732	Mortland, J.	X		402451	Murrell, W. H.	O	
792522	Morton, J.	X		18389	Murtha, J.	+	
430236	Morton, L. M.	O		79103	Musgrave, W. L.	O	
446233	Moss, G.	O		2356088	Muskey, A.	O	
3130288	Mott, W. T.	O		2115472	Musselman, D. F.	O	
434195	Mould, G. M.	O		4266998	Myatt, E. W.	O	
802633	Mould, H. J.	O		432288	Myers, G.	O	
79108	Mounsey, G. G.	+		4100732	Myers, H.	O	
79203	Mount, G. N.	O		79200	Myler, A.	O	
79253	Mousley, W. J.	+		79288	Nadon, A.	O	
883470	Moyer, I.	X		101525	Nail, M. D.	O	
102068	Mudge, A. E.	O		216568	Nash, W.	O	
435798	Muir, H.	+		80093	Neale, E. W.	O	
402665	Mumford, J.	O		100603	Neave, W.	O	
80265	Muncaster, J. W.	O	D.C.M.	447783	Neeland, T. W.	O	
3131299	Munch, L. N.	O		23559277	Negus, F. T.	O	
809025	Mundy, H. A.	O		904191	Neil, E.	O	
79857	Mundy, R. V.	O		696360	Neilsen, N. S.	+	
425634	Mungham, H. W.	+		696855	Neilsen, N. V. A.	O	
231697	Munro, A.	O		100878	Nelles, A.	O	
100513	Munro, J.	O		101180	Nelles, F. R.	O	
252650	Munroe, P.	O		2115474	Nelson, G. A.	O	
823812	Munt, G. T.	O		253150	Nelson, H.	O	
183525	Murdock, H. E.	O		883053	Nelson, N.	O	
808298	Murphy, J.	O		1004101	Nelson, S. L.	O	
625162	Murphy, W.	O		231078	Nelson, T. W.	O	
811844	Murray, E. F.	+		3131443	Nelson, W. E.	O	
160151	Murray, E. J.	O		80049	Nesbit, A. F.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

497

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
3206054	Olson, A.	O		606283	Page, S.	O	
443300	Olson, C.	O		447182	Page, T.	O	
895187	Onslow, S.	O		79541	Page-Green, R.	S.	
696813	Oppiger, P.	+ O		231350	Pagee, E.	O	
4002002	Oram, G. W.	O		808206	Painter, W.	O	
79260	Orchard, L. B.	O		79432	Pallrey, Thos.		
157039	Orgar, J. E.	X		696381	Palmer, G. A.		
231630	Orn, J. E.	M.M.		79125	Pamplin, W. H.		
79121	Orr, A. C.	O		435001	Paradise, D. W.	O	
100232	Orr, D.	O		425211	Parbery, H. J.		
79540	Orr, S.	X		160552	Park, C.	O	
231733	Orser, H. H.	O		696997	Park, C. H.		
425172	Osborne, J.	O +		79186	Park, J. S.		
2621807	Osborne, S. J.	O		811599	Park, R.	O	
696518	Ostopuhu, M.	O		808766	Parker, E. H.	O	
808734	Ostrom, F.	O		3207422	Parker, H. D.	O	
425173	Ostrowsiec, E.	O		696975	Parker, H. J.	O	
257439	Ottas, C. M.	O		101327	Parker, H. W.	O	
2109969	Ottersoni, O. H.	M.M.		80188	Parker, L.	O	
3130540	Ottewell, A. E.			811642	Parkhurst, W.	O	
79459	Ouellette, E.			3205264	Parkinson, E. T.		
258276	Ouellette, L.	O		808115	Parnell, J. H.	O	
793357	Ouinette, C.	O +		2356172	Parham, F.	O	
231281	Ouston, R.	O		2115090	Parrainta, P.	O	
446963	Owen, C. A.	O +		79875	Parrott, H. J.	O	
267969	Owen, F.	O		160315	Parsons, A. H.	O	
79695	Owen, F. K.	X		79430	Parsons, A. H.	O	
100698	Owen, H. W.	X		80134	Parsons, H.	O	
79532	Owen, J.	O		2109927	Parsons, H. B.	O	
696730	Owen, J. L.	O		811312	Parton, R.	O X	
446689	Owen, P. R.	O		3130542	Pasmore, F. H.	O	
446841	Owens, E.			904527	Patch, T. G.		
3206467	Owens, T. J.			2621922	Pate, J. M.	O	
79054	Oxley, C.	M.M.		811333	Paterson, J.	O X	
80051	Packford, A.	O		423095	Paterson, J. W.	O	
49877	Page, C. E.	O		79599	Paterson, Wilfred	O	
696624	Page, W.	X		79123	Paterson, W. S.	O	
100353	Page, N.	O		79122	Paterson, W. S.	O	
696163	Page, P.	O		422038	Patey, S.	O +	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

499

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
697059	Pinkham, C. W.	+ +		79699	Preston, R.	+ +	
79987	Pippin, C. L.	Q		79293	Price, G.	0	
79188	Pirie, J.	+ +		2113315	Price, G. E.	0	
435225	Pitchford, S.	+ +		625124	Price, H. A.	0	M.M.
1010980	Pitman, C. H.	+ +		690431	Price, M.	0	
1156661	Pitt, G. H.	+ +		433839	Price, T.	0	
4001111	Player, L.	O		808049	Priestly, R. J.	0	
430372	Plumber, F.			184233	Pridge, A. J.		
898553	Pochinok, J.			696155	Prince, C.		
1011733	Poile, A.	O		258524	Prince, G.	+ +	D.C.M.
696707	Pollakoski, P.	O		79873	Profit, J. A.	0	M.M.
2115229	Pollard, R. C.	O		811422	Proudlove, C.	0	
3205999	Pollock, L. W. H.	O		7928	Proven, J. S.	0	
79426	Polkowsky, A.			79124	Proven, W.	0	
697084	Poleas, T.	O		79443	Pryde, J.	0	
3206949	Pomerleau, D.			79958	Pryor, F. G.	0	
231033	Pond, A. L.			231041	Pryor, G. W.	0	
231386	Ponton, A. I.			696433	Pryor, H. F.	0	
71192	Porter, D.	O		18674	Publicover, R.		
79433	Porter, H. D.	O		79743	Pugh, E. C.		
472205	Porter, S. S.	+ +		79629	Pugh, J. N.	0	
183630	Portway, P.	+ +		808395	Purdy, D.	0	
812092	Postle, L. F.			80194	Purdy, W. F.	0	
781403	Potts, A. E.			80261	Purser, R. D.	0	
808724	Potts, T.	+ +		310313	Purvis, V.		
79697	Powell, J. H.	O		160372	Putman, J. M.	0	
696300	Powell, L. S.	O		160668	Putman, J. M.	0	
231262	Power, A. C.			602451	Pycraft, R. W.	+	
697069	Power, G.	+ +		79601	Pym, C. J.		
426742	Pownall, E. W.			79600	Pym, R. M.		
80269	Poyer, J. E. P.	+ +		430187	Pyner, D.	0	(Drowned H. S. Anglia)
808609	Pratt, A.	O		252184	Quadling, R.		
79959	Pratt, R. B.	O		2517305	Quaife, H. F.	0	
3205528	Pratt, S. G.			696557	Quackboerner, A. D	0	
231418	Pratt, W. P.			696118	Quenelle, Wm.	0	
2621937	Preece, C. R.	O		699281	Quenelle, J. H.	0	
79444	Preece, E.			3206723	Quigg, W. T.	0	
430403	Presley, J. M.	O		184177	Quigley, S.	0	
883362	Preston, J. R.	O					

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

501

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79666	Richards, R. H.			696519	Robb, B. R.	O	
80053	Richardson, D. P.	O		808193	Robb, J. W.	+	
79960	Richardson, F. G.	O		696386	Robbin, W. J.	O	
104890	Richardson, G. V.	O		80144	Roberts, A. C.		
3205996	Richardson, H. P.	O		80056	Roberts, F.		
696232	Richardson, J. J.	O +		797972	Roberts, H.		
100713	Richardson, J. M.	O		160027	Roberts, J.		D.C.M.
3205398	Richardson, S. D.	O		696622	Roberts, J. W.		M.M.
3205669	Richardson, S. W.	O		49358	Roberts, P. H.		
425599	Richardson, W.	O	M.M.	21411	Roberts, V.		
80055	Richmond, A.	O		228396	Roberts, W.		
180416	Richmond, E.	O +		1066039	Robertson, A.	O X	
3206521	Rickson, H.	O		430022	Robertson, A. B.	O	
79669	Riddell, W. J.	O		696236	Robertson, A. M.	O	
313019	Ridding, J.	O		79964	Robertson, Chas.	O	
79441	Riddle, A. B.	O		809150	Robertson, C. E.	O	
425501	Ridge, H. V.	O		79966	Robertson, David.	O	
186679	Ridge, J.	O		79742	Robertson, Donald	O	
895074	Riley, G. T.	O		466309	Robertson, D. W.	O	
79515	Riley, J.	O		226831	Robertson, H.	O	
895126	Riley, M. C.	O		808128	Robertson, J. E.	O	
231691	Riley, W. M.	O		809040	Robertson, J. H.	O	M.M.
183636	Riley, W. P.	O		812022	Robertson, R.	O	M.M.
3206811	Rinaldi, V.	O		466470	Robertson, R. J.	O +	
3205114	Rinn, P.	O		651150	Robertson, S. M.	O	
696713	Ripley, R.	O		2529363	Robertson, T.	O	
808396	Ripley, W. M.	O		79952	Robertson, T. A.	O	
476650	Rippon, R. B.	O		115317	Robertson, W.	O	
696738	Risk, G. V.	O		696068	Robertson, W. R.		
3205540	Rises, F. G.	O		79438	Robins, H. F.		
79493	Ritchie, John	O		80180	Robinson, C. H.		
79703	Ritchie, James	O +		425529	Robinson, D. A.	O	
79295	Ritchie, J. F.	O		79435	Robinson, H. M.	O	
252460	Ritz, R.	O		4335401	Robinson, J. M.	O +	
812094	Rivers, B. I.	O		2621980	Robinson, J. W.	O	
696890	Rixson, S. W.	O		183704	Robinson, N. C.	O	
79492	Roach, J. B.	O		446728	Robinson, O. L.	O	
3205058	Roach, J. W.	O		883798	Robinson, T.	O	
79439	Roach, W.	O		466789		O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

503

79963	Robinson, T.	C.	W.	O	180785	Rositter, C.	A.	W.
183618	Robinson, T.	E.	O	O	427783	Rouleau, G.	G.	O
2538324	Robinson, W.	O	O	O	79544	Roulston, S.	S.	O
79798	Robson, J.	O	O	O	3206200	Rourke, W.	W.	O
183526	Robson, J.	O	O	O	434110	Rouse, H. J.	J.	O
79877	Robson, W.	H.	I.	O	439021	Rowbottom, C.	I.	O
3205401	Rodd, R.	O	O	O	467019	Rowden, M.	M.	D.C.M.
79664	Rodgers, J.	O	O	O	79797	Rowe, R.	R.	O
423266	Rodwell, F.	J.	O	O	808318	Rowlands, J.	J.	O
6015	Roebrook, H.	J.	O	O	80084	Rowley, F.	E.	O
115567	Rogers, A.	E.	O	O	408192	Rowlinson, A.	A.	O
79965	Rogers, A.	E.	O	O	79618	Roy, C.	H.	M.M.
443828	Rogers, G.	E.	O	O	3205905	Rudd, A.	H.	O
79543	Rogers, L.	E.	O	O	160859	Rudolph, T.	C.	O
320404	Rogers, T.	R.	O	O	261967	Rugland, W.	L.	G.
80233	Rogers, T.	R.	O	O	696987	Rumberg, O.	A.	O
79440	Rolle, H.	F.	O	O	425275	Rumford, W.	A.	O
80052	Roney, C.	W.	O	O	883243	Runham, T.	McC.	O
79976	Roose, F.	O	O	O	883050	Rupp, L.	E.	O
252441	Root, Jr.	G.	B.	O	184025	Rushforth, J.	J.	O
79665	Root, H.	N.	O	O	696572	Rushworth, J.	J.	O
80227	Rope, L.	G.	O	O	100718	Russ, M.	W.	O
427499	Rose, G.	A.	O	O	100612	Russell, A.	A.	O
226509	Rose, G.	A.	O	O	402394	Russell, H.	C.	O
160061	Rose, P.	E.	O	O	79627	Russell, H.	C.	O
80166	Ross, C.	W.	O	O	430124	Russell, P.	E.	O
79701	Ross, H.	V.	O	O	175345	Russell, R.	R.	O
463353	Ross, J.	J.	O	O	161183	Ruscello, A.	A.	O
79434	Ross, J.	C.	O	O	79603	Rust, J.	B.	O
183597	Ross, J.	C.	O	O	183434	Rustad, G.	J.	O
809085	Ross, J.	L.	O	M.M. and bar	183704	Rutherford, A.	J.	O
696605	Ross, J.	M.	O	O	320547	Rutherford, D.	S.	O
3130560	Ross, J.	R.	O	O	696005	Rutherford, J.	F.	O
3130323	Ross, J.	O.	O	O	184056	Rutherford, N.	N.	O
803776	Ross, T.	T.	O	O	80192	Rutledge, W.	J.	O
435648	Ross, W.	W.	O	O	2621804	Rutter, H.	H.	O
4100732	Ross, W.	W.	O	O	883376	Ryder, M.	M.	O
79668	Ross, W.	H.	O	O	100228	Rye, F.	F.	O
231698	Ross, W.	H.	O	O	3131031	Ryerson, S.	J.	O
447475	Rosser, R.	C.	O	O	100177	Saasted, O.	O	O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79511	Sabourin, H.	O		79606	Scott, W.	O	
204174	Sagar, W.	O		895426	Scott, W. J.	O	
425283	Sager, J. E.	+ +		231449	Scregg, R.	O	
415531	St. Jacques, S.			160648	Scragge, W.		
79487	St. Louis, H.			79481	Scullion, J.		
800176	Salter, C. E.	O		408535	Scully, P.	O	
80260	Salter, H. E.	O		183593	Seager, E. E.		
79107	Salter, I. E.	+ +		183742	Seaman, G. W.		
80143	Salter, W. E.			249409	Searle, S. J.		
426745	Sammon, J. A.	O	M.M.	696736	Searies, G. W.	O	
79967	Sanson, C.	O	M.M.	183462	Seath, R.	O	
883531	Sanborn, D. L.	O		79507	Seaton, T.	O	
425786	Sanders, F.	O		425303	Selkirk, J.		
2356236	Sanders, T. W.	O		2115589	Selstedt, H.		
472351	Sarney, E. H.			183249	Selwyn, W. A.		
216335	Sarrasin, W. J.	O	M.M.	79633	Sergeant, H.		
4106808	Saska, N.			808704	Sergent, J.		
446419	Saunders, J.	4		3206532	Setter, P.		
883368	Saunders, J. A.	+ +		696624	Sevard, J. B.		
79675	Saunders, J. G.			447427	Sewell, D.		
183641	Saunders, W.			434429	Sewell, J.		
100379	Saunders, W. E.			3205070	Sewell, L. H.		
3133483	Savioe, S.	O		425728	Sexton, C. C.		
79706	Sawyer, C. Q.	O		79676	Sexton, G. E.		
79795	Sawyer, W. H.	O		446562	Seymour, L. R.		
80151	Scammell, E. J.	O		697003	Shakalevich, K.		
434467	Scammell, W. W.	O		3207354	Shale, J. H.		
425715	Schoenperlen, A. F.			466204	Shanks, G.		
101373	Schofield, A. R.	+ +		183277	Shanla, J.	O	
696653	Scollen, B.			79910	Shannon, J.		
80846	Scollen, E.	O		79630	Shanton, A.		
79504	Scorer, H.			812108	Shantz, A. C.		
447219	Scotcher, I.	O		79635	Shantz, L.	O	
79670	Scotland, T. H.	O		463995	Sharman, C.		
651160	Scott, C. B.	O		184100	Sharon, H.	M.	
79632	Scott, Jno	O		100964	Sharp, D.	O	
79486	Scott, R. H.			183191	Sharp, D. R.		
79513	Scott, W.	O		447212	Sharpe, G. S.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

505

		D.C.M. M.M.		D.C.M. M.M.
184103	Shaver, E. B. H.	O		Simmons, C.
808271	Shaver, F. F. G.	O		Simmons, G.
79604	Shaw, A. F.	O		Simmons, M.
160358	Shaw, A. L.	O		Sinnger, T. M.
100978	Shaw, C. T.	O		3205159
422513	Shaw, E.	O		Simmin, G. W.
446721	Shaw, E. N.	O		3206332
79968	Shaw, R. E.	O		Simpson, G. W.
425311	Shaw, R. M.	O		446384
3207578	Shaw, W.	O		Simpson, J. W.
101570	Shaw, W. G.	O		79625
409537	Shaw, W. L.	O		Simpson, J. M.
79680	Sheard, H.	O		101302
79969	Sheashby, H. G.	O		Simpson, R. H.
13977	Sheffield, C.	O		2356113
320354	Sheilbourne, A.	O		Simpson, W.
79024	Sheldrake, L. P.	O		79607
80200	Shelton, W.	O		Sims, E. G.
80236	Shepherd, E. B.	O		+
79489	Sheppard, W. E.	O		O
80143	Shergold, W. A.	O		101676
79484	Sheridan, S.	O		Sinclair, A.
100199	Sherlock, C. J.	O		883005
79671	Sherrett, S.	O		Sinclair, C.
3206558	Sherwood, R. V.	O		231163
2115386	Shidler, R. P.	O		Sinclair, D.
883723	Shields, W.	O		184109
79971	Shilland, J. M.	O		252204
3206856	Shillington, L. J.	O		Sinclair, J. H.
80060	Shinnan, A.	O		811632
3205489	Short, I. E.	O		895112
80250	Short, O.	O		Sisson, W. J.
696590	Shortt, E.	O		446805
466301	Shropshire, N. P.	O		Skelly, G.
160830	Shults, H.	O		79678
408119	Sibbald, W. A.	O		Sketchley, F. V.
183361	Siderfin, J. N.	O		79679
3205512	Silcox, J. H. B.	O		Sketchley, S. J.
100207	Sills, A. F.	O		184042
446204	Simmonds, C. E.	O		Skinner, F. R.
				183050
				Skinner, H. H.
				183200
				Skinner, H.
				79708
				Skinner, W.
				3205645
				Skog, J.
				811190
				Slater, S. F.
				3205109
				Slim, W. H.
				3205920
				Slinger, C. O.
				79653
				Slingsby, J. T.
				3205611
				Sloan, W. L.
				80221
				Slowman, O.
				425328
				Small, A. E.
				210954
				Smart, H. A.
				427616
				Smeaton, H.
				79488
				Smirl, W. P.
				80145
				Smith, A.
				430398
				Smith, A.

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79483	Smith, A.	O		79673	Smith, R.	O	
69619	Smith, A. G.	O		79883	Smith, R.	O	
447818	Smith, A. G.	O		446585	Smith, R. E.	O	
3207604	Smith, C. B.	M.M.		79634	Smith, Robert	+ O	
101160	Smith, C. E.			80111	Smith, T.		
101715	Smith, C. H.	+		80229	Smith, Thos.	O	
2109851	Smith, C. T.	+		79881	Smith, T. E.	O	
696035	Smith, E.	O		79550	Smith, T. J.	O	
446610	Smith, D.	O		1600090	Smith, T. J.	O	
696542	Smith, E. E.	O		79705	Smith, W. A.	O	
809062	Smith, E.	M.M.		79546	Smith, W. J.		
79545	Smith, E.	O		183670	Smith, W. T. H.	O	
3206411	Smith, F.			472246	Smyth, J. S.	/ O	
808205	Smith, G.	O		3207667	Smythe, E. S.		
808369	Smith, G.	O		4000020	Snazel, J. S.		
79791	Smith, G. A.	O		681026	Snook, G.		
69616	Smith, G. A.	+		184054	Snow, C. H.	O	
79548	Smith, G. F.	+		184204	Sogge, O.	O	
3207556	Smith, G. M.	O		79879	Soley, T. H.	O	
622145	Smith, H. C.	O		79505	Solfleet, T.		M.M.
79485	Smith, H. E.	M.M.		696304	Sondell, R.	O	
895017	Smith, H. G.	++		894463	Sorenson, C.	O	
425336	Smith, H. L.			183890	Souecho, F.		
80100	Smith, J.	O		100396	South, E.		
151914	Smith, J.	O		184189	Sparrow, J. A.		
80248	Smith, J.	M.M.		51080	Sparrow, J. F.		
427525	Smith, J.	+		80273	Spence, G. J. W.		
79972	Smith, John	O		808616	Spence, T. G. W.	O	
231011	Smith, J. A.	O		423345	Spencer, G. A.	O	
435115	Smith, J. B.	O		812186	Spencer, J. A.	O	
180748	Smith, J. E.	O		183506	Spencer, W. A.	O	
425639	Smith, J. E.	O		808894	Spielman, F.		
633782	Smith, J. G.	O		2353406	Spilllett, L. F.	O	
455438	Smith, J. H.	O		79658	Spink, G. G.	O	
79974	Smith, J. S.	O		80058	Spink, J.	O	
434279	Smith, J. L.	O		160969	Spink, J. H. G.	O	
793267	Smith, J. L.	O		160017	Splane, A. W.		
79482	Smith, J. O.	O		231568	Sprague, F.	O	
79980	Smith, P.	O		184008	Spreng, G.		
		M.M.					

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

507

320206463	Sprengle, A. J.	0	Sierry, E.	
174937	Spring, A. E.	0	Stevens, H. S.	0
101068	Spry, W.	0	Stevens, H.	0
252478	Squires, G. F.	+	Stevens, L.	+
231238	Stabback, R. M.	0	Stevens, L.	0
80251	Stacey, C.	0	Stevenson, F. N.	0
161553	Stad, L.	0	Stevenson, J. W.	0
79796	Stallard, H. J. P.	0	Stevenson, T.	+
808069	Standwick, H. H.	0	Stevenson, W. L.	0
101334	Standeven, G.	0	Stewart, A. B.	0
800567	Staniforth, D.	0	Stewart, C.	0
2109868	Stanley, H. M.	+	Stewart, D.	+
80256	Stanley, R. G.	0	Stewart, G. H.	0
183978	Stanton, R.	0	Stewart, G. H.	0
183564	Stapleton, H.	0	Stewart, H. E.	0
427429	Stapleton, J. G.	0	Stewart, J.	0
696116	Stapleton, J. G.	0	Stewart, J. H.	0
175375	Stapley, C. R.	0	Stewart, K. S.	0
79549	Stark, F. B.	0	Stewart, K. D.	0
80061	Stark, I. O.	0	Stewart, R. D.	0
446124	Stark, J.	0	Stewart, R.	0
231801	Stanyer, J. T.	0	Stewart, R. J.	+
79490	Stead, W. G.	0	Stewart, R. J.	0
3205654	Stearns, W. H.	0	Stewart, W. J.	0
79677	Steeds, F. H.	0	Stewart, W. J.	0
3205467	Steel, J.	0	Stiles, E. L.	0
18395	Steel, R.	0	Stiles, J. A.	0
446068	Steel, R.	0	Still, W. B.	0
79704	Steele, D.	0	Simson, O.	0
439000	Steels, A. E.	+	Stitt, A.	0
696909	Steen, E. R.	0	Stitt, J. W.	0
832805	Steeves, M. J.	0	Stock, J. W.	0
79654	Steeves, Roy	0	Stockford, C. P.	0
808919	Stenhouse, A. D.	0	Stokes, L. B.	0
447216	Stenhouse, H.	0	Stone, E. A.	0
79976	Stephen, C. H.	0	Stone, E. W.	0
80252	Stephen, J. V.	+	Stone, T. F. M.	0
210898	Stephens, H. V.	0	Storm, J.	0
3205311	Stephens, W.	0	Stephenson, J.	0
696113	Stephenson, J.	0		0

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
425374	Storror, F. J. C.	X		231683	Surtrees, S. H.		
425666	Story, C. W. J.	O		3206459	Suttill, F.		M.M.
425611	Story, C. H.	O		79696	Swann, L. G.		
425375	Stoughton, J. M.	O		425389	Swannell, F. W.		
79975	Stout, J. W.	O	M.M.	79979	Swan, W. C.		
696888	Strachan, H. E. R.	O		446614	Swanson, J. G.		
696877	Strachan, T. E. L.	O	+ O	49514	Swarbrick, T.		
447550	Strang, A. W.	O		79512	Swardridge, G. F.		
447477	Strang, W.	O		2109869	Swartz, F. L.		
446645	Strange, G. P.	O		79547	Swartz, V. A.		
466320	Stratton, A. P.	O		3205462	Swayze, J. G. F.		
3207552	Strickland, J.	O		799636	Swede, G.		
80059	Stringer, B.	O		3207690	Sweeting, G.		
79605	Stringer, J. W.	O		231734	Sweeneyton, B. R.		
117564	Stringer, W. E.	O		231805	Swift, S. B.		
183539	Strom, J.	O		799978	Swift, W.		
427229	Stromberg, G. A.	O		79672	Swinton, J.		
150630	Stronner, C. H.	O		79790	Sworder, C. C.		
79977	Strong, J. A.	O	M.M.	800081	Sykes, A.		
231346	Stuart, C. A.	O	+ O	252194	Symon, J. F.		
3205590	Stuart, J. H.	O		697083	Symonds, H. A.		
3205373	Stuart, L. M.	O		80210	Symons, T. W.		
2109858	Stubbs, O. W.	O		431116	Symons, W.		
79674	Stubbs, W. E.	O		79652	Synmuck, J.		
80141	Stump, L. E.	O		160611	Taggart, G. C.		
101603	Sturgis, G.	O		175043	Tate, F.		
79880	Sturley, G. V.	O		435421	Talbot, G. F.		
622052	Styles, A. E.	O		808308	Talbot, H. F.		
80096	Suffield, E. W.	O		231376	Talbot, W. H.		
809116	Sugden, G. A.	O X		79503	Tallman, F.		
115221	Sugden, H.	O		446176	Tumbling, W. W.		
809115	Sugden, S. C.	O X		80085	Tans, A. W.		
231475	Sullivan, A. E.	O		79789	Tanner, T.		
2611826	Sullivan, G. S.	O	M.M.	898397	Tarasak, S.		
811341	Sullivan, J. A.	O		2621924	Tarn, A.		
430395	Sullivan, T. W.	O		79640	Tarn, A. J.		
240485	Summerlin, W. A.	O		883082	Tarr, P. J.		
183388	Summers, J. J.	O		808230	Tarry, H.		
79506	Surry, N.	O		115830	Tavender, L.		

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

509

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
808595	Tiltman, E. W.			425431	Tull, H. W.	+	
3205483	Timm, A. F.	O		160995	Tulloch, W. R.	A.	
80064	Timmis, F.	O		2115234	Tumber, G.	O	
808518	Tindall, J. F.	+		3206330	Turgeon, P.		
438918	Toal, T.	O		80062	Turnbull, J. H.	O	
174762	Todd, A. T.	O		160380	Turnbull, P. M.	O	
696009	Todd, P. F.	O		446014	Turner, A. H.	O	
101238	Tole, F. E.	O	+	80087	Turner, A. H.		
3205675	Tomlinson, V. L.	O		183783	Turner, A. H.		
183412	Tompkins, D. L.	O		248501	Turner, D.		
79637	Tompkins, S. T.	O		79638	Turner, F. B.		
696734	Tooke, H. A.	O	M.M.	115785	Turner, G.	O	
696057	Toole, A. R.	O		79985	Turner, H.	O	Fr. Med d'hon avec glaives (en Argent)
79713	Toole, E.	O	+				
79478	Toomey, W. G.	O		434964	Turner, H. H.	O	
3207312	Torgerson, J. S.	O		79476	Turner, H. M.	O	
80094	Torrens, E.	O		79681	Turner, J. M.	O	
435418	Towers, R.			79264	Turner, J. M.	O	
79475	Towler, A.	O		79480	Turner, R. M.		
79479	Townend, W.	O		79682	Turner, W.	O	
447228	Townsend, C. A.	O	M.M.	447803	Turner, W.		
79477	Townsend, C. W.	O		100106	Turner, W. H.		
447322	Townsend, D. M.	O		79502	Turner, H. M.		
447375	Townsend, W. G.	O		79986	Tutt, J.		
425426	Townson, H.	O		79784	Twissell, H. B.		
79724	Toyne, F.	O		79884	Tydd, E. F. P.		
100049	Tracey, A.	O		446027	Tyler, F. G.	O	
831643	Tran, F.	O		696509	Tyson, J.	O	
79886	Trevor, C.	O	+	696153	Tyson, J.	O	
79787	Tregellas, W.	O	M.M.	3205531	Umbel, J. G.	O	
696850	Treford, A. R.	O	M.M.	79785	Underwood, G.	O	
79982	Trenholme, T. W.	O		2288432	Undheim, T.	O	
3207368	Trervold, T.	O		427484	Unwin, E. W.	O	
3206284	Trindle, D.	O		100686	Upham, A. H.	O	
252218	Trotter, A. V.	O		184073	Upton, H. W.	O	
446768	Trotter, J.	O		79987	Ure, A.	O	
425428	Troyer, J. J.	O		446735	Urquhart, R.	O	
425676	Trumbley, E. R.	O		434172	Usher, H.	O	
1013449	Tucker, J. M.	O					

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

M.M., M.S.M.
437937 Utas, C. O
883301 Utas, G. O
160898 Uzzel, C. E. O
800658 Valentine, D. H. O
435271 Valentine, H. O
811761 VanAlstyne, A. E. O
184202 Vanner, W. E. O
654108 Vanstone, W. L. O
184186 Vanthaghem, A. O
79474 Van Velzen, S. J. O
186725 Van Wyck, W. H. O
80245 Vaughan, W. O
79732 Vaux, H. O
79641 Vavre, E. O
883270 Veeder, J. A. O
3030843 Veige, R. M. M.M.
79642 Veno, A. O
79710 Vermandel, T. X
80239 Vernon, F. X
1114942 Vickers, S. B. O
883633 Vig, J. O. O
80204 Vigar, C. F. O
787783 Vincent, B. O
183489 Virtue, S. R. O
904630 Vyash, A. T. O
240449 Vollick, V. D. O
101099 Vosburgh, F. O
6211886 Waddington, S. +
883589 Wade, G. G. O
696459 Wade, H. W. +
183357 Wagner, C. W. O
231430 Waggoner, H. W. O
231038 Wain, A. O
80108 Wainwright, J. S. O
4278556 Waite, L. B. O
797118 Waite, S. O
79662 Wakefield, G. O
79497 Wakefield, V. O
79465 Wakeham, J. O
79740 Wakelyn, A. O
446872 Wakelyn, E. M. O
446747 Wakelyn, G. J. O
446746 Wakelyn, S. Y. O
183508 Walkden, W. O
231694 Walker, C. C. O
79891 Walker, E. C. +
895100 Walker, G. O
3205407 Walker, G. O
100006 Walker, H. O
3207362 Walker, H. J. O
693340 Walker, J. H. +
883250 Walker, J. H. O
446132 Walker, J. S. O
463568 Walker, L. H. O
79691 Walker, W. O
79553 Wall, J. O
445716 Wallace, F. A. O
160114 Waller, J. H. O
808203 Walls, B. O
80230 Walsh, E. B. O
79650 Walsh, Peter. O
79622 Walsh, W. M. J. O
79407 Walters, C. W. T
228270 Walters, J. T. O
79608 Walters, W. O
434042 Walton, W. O
883071 Wannacott, F. A. O
3206919 Ward, A. R. +
696810 Ward, B. V. O
100966 Ward, C. O
79554 Ward, J. L. O
80255 Ward, J. T. O
697007 Ward, R. O
69809 Ware, D. R. O
79988 Ware, F. O
160702 Ware, F. O
808031 Warrington, J. O
20834 Warner, G. E. +
79990 Warner, R. G. O

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.	NAME.	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS.
79989	Warren, B.	+		696900	Weatherby, P.	
161117	Warren, J. D.	0		115873	Weatherhead, S. F.	
231076	Warren, J. E.	0		446525	Weaver, C.	
79714	Warren, L. G.	0		696957	Webb, G. W.	0
625356	Wass, J.	0		447424	Webb, H.	
904522	Waters, S. E.	0		80281	Webb, H. G.	
183207	Watkins, A.			79473	Webb, Jno.	
79889	Watkins, J. H.			79645	Webb, J. E.	0
696538	Watling, S. R.	■■■		79273	Webb, J. H.	0
299979	Watmore, W. C.			231432	Webb, R. H.	
79717	Watson, A.	0		80069	Webber, F. W.	+
2621817	Watson, A. W.			100723	Weber, L. A.	
100706	Watson, A. W.	0	M.M.	183388	Webster, A. H.	
696382	Watson, E.	0		231506	Webster, G. R.	0
808722	Watson, F. S.	0		105031	Webster, H. W.	0
79499	Watson, G.			79693	Weddell, A.	
183333	Watson, J.	+		79741	Weddell, E.	
183483	Watson, J.	0		117617	Weddell, J. W.	+
696123	Watson, J.	0		696110	Wedderburn, L. H.	□ O
696640	Watson, J.	0		183209	Weedon, R.	
624266	Watson, J. A.	0		895077	Weegar, E. A.	+
808106	Watson, J. W.	0		80282	Weeks, J. W.	
696451	Watson, R.	0		231504	Weighill, A. J.	O
425466	Watson, S.	0		79993	Weighill, C.	
425616	Watson, T.	■■■		160586	Weightman, H.	
696413	Watson, T. G.	0		3205328	Weier, R. W.	
80287	Watson, T. G.	0		435534	Weir, J.	
79991	Watson, W.	0		81154	Weir, N. K.	
808260	Watson, W. R.	+		808139	Weitzel, W. H. D.	0
466001	Watt, G.	0		79893	Wells, W. H.	
425460	Watters, J. E.			101529	Welsh, A. W.	
79683	Watts, F. K.			184119	Wemp, O.	+
2109861	Watts, T.			80214	Wenlock, W. H.	
115754	Waugh, V. E.			79471	Wensley, A.	
696457	Way, I. J.			150694	Wesley, A.	+
79657	Way, W. A.			80088	West, G. R.	
895096	Waynard, J. P.	0		101681	West, W. E.	0
101036	Wear, C. A.	0	M.M.	79555	West, W. G.	
2355316	Weatherall, G. A.			231612	West, W. M.	+

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

513

79890	Westcott, C.	O		3206376	Whitmore, H. J.	O
216899	Westerberg, A.	O		183397	Whitney, T. W.	O
160937	Weston, F.	O		79616	Whittaker, H. J.	O
79495	Westlake, A. E.	O		79648	Whittaker, J. J.	O
696928	Westover, G. E.	O	M.M., D.G.M.	56054	Whittaker, W.	O
898184	Wet, A.	O		808030	Whitten, H. B.	O
183661	Weter, P.	O		3205648	Whittle, D. C.	O
801156	Whale, A. F.	O		101720	Wiberg, E. F.	++
160930	Whalen, J. G. R.	O		79555	Wik, J.	
696497	Wharry, S. G. R.	O		101592	Wild, R. S.	O
79781	Wheatley, J. M.	O		922016	Widdig, H.	O
79694	Wheatley, R. S.	O		79686	Widish, G.	O
883215	Whetham, P. C.	O		446103	Wilkinson, A.	O
160100	Whitaker, E.	+		696178	Wilkinson, E.	O
796449	Whitcutt, F. C.	O		228190	Wilkinson, J. R.	O
696808	White, A. B.	O		79644	Wilkinson, J. R.	O
883749	White, C. R.	O		3207409	Willard, O. C.	O
696233	E.		231474	Willert, E. J.	O	
446469	White, G. W.	O		696589	Willet, W. J.	O
79496	White, H. E.	O		80072	Williams, A. E.	O
80107	White, J. R. G.	O		700691	Williams, A. W. E.	O
160005	White, L. W.	O		2621851	Williams, E.	O
2490505	White, R. T.	O		435126	Williams, H. A.	O
696380	White, R. E.	O		430393	Williams, H. M.	+
142146	White, T.	O		79464	Williams, H. P.	O
446803	White, W. E.	O		796687	Williams, I. S.	O
455703	White, W. K.	O		446085	Williams, J. S.	O
231654	White, W. S.	O		79647	Williams, N. C.	O
696962	Whitehead, A.	O		108631	Williams, O. C.	O
696142	Whitehead, G.	+		228394	Williams, P. D.	O
160638	Whitehead, W. T.	O		100821	Williams, P. N.	O
80198	Whitelaw, W. A.	O		3205521	Williamson, F. E.	O
231384	Whiteoak, W. H.	O		228482	Williamson, F. E.	+
183246	Whiteside, J. H.	O		80087	Williamson, J. C. B.	O
883458	Whiteside, W.	O		100343	Williamson, J. C. B.	
696504	Whitfield, C. H.	O		79656	Williamson, J. C. B.	
79716	Whiting, C. H.	O		101507	Williamson, J. C. B.	
79403	Whita, J.	O		79685	Willis, P.	
79689	Whibley, A.	O		183302	Willcox, G.	
696586	Whibley, G. W.	O		79935	Willow, R.	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

NUMBER.	NAME.	CASUALTIES	AWARDS,	CASUALTIES.	AWARDS,	NUMBER.	NAME.
473147	Wills, E. O.	O	O	79498	Winchester, L. R.	O X	
808992	Wills, R.	O	O	3297619	Winder, J. E.		
79467	Willisie, F. S.	O	O	79552	Windross, H. B.		
808943	Wilson, A.	O	O	79992	Wingfield, W.		
80205	Wilson, A. T.	O	O	79800	Wingrove, W.	O	
690335	Wilson, C.	O	O	80670	Wingrove, W.	O	
160916	Wilson, E.	O	O	161222	Winkles, S. J.	O	
696946	Wilson, F. E.	O	O	79715	Winstell, E.	O	
80215	Wilson, F. N.	O	O	79466	Winter, J. E.	O	
3205901	Wilson, F. W. A.	X	O	231229	Winter, J. A. S.	O	
160273	Wilson, F. W. A.	X	O	808307	Wise, G. T.	O	
79660	Wilson, G.	O	O	696880	Wishart, J.	O	
3207410	Wilson, G. E.	O	O	80116	Wishart, W.	O	
434991	Wilson, G. F.	O	O	3205525	Wishart, W. F.	O	
832958	Wilson, G. G.	O	O	79610	Witherby, N. G.	O	
101407	Wilson, H.	O	O	100072	Witherby, R. W.	O	
79500	Wilson, H. M.	O	O	100071	Witherby, W. C.	M.M.	
79801	Wilson, J.	O	O	696020	Withers, N. A.	O	
160270	Wilson, J. E.	O	O	79690	Witherspoon, J. C.	O	
101558	Wilson, J. F.	O	O	1010107	Woffenden, R.	O	
883754	Wilson, J. G.	O	X	425501	Wolfenden, J. R.	M. M.	
79936	Wilson, J. M.	O	X	80071	Wood, A. S.	O	
808711	Wilson, J. R.	O	O	101757	Wood, G.	O	
3205331	Wilson, J. S.	O	O	434840	Wood, H.	O	
883761	Wilson, J. S. A.	O	O	808968	Wood, J.	O	
696541	Wilson, J. G. M.	O	O	2115326	Wood, J. W.	O	
114894	Wilson, J. M.	O	O	79688	Wood, P. L.	O	
447240	Wilson, J. R.	O	O	809039	Wood, S. R.	O	
3205342	Wilson, J. S. A.	O	O	183627	Woods, A. E.	O	
79468	Wilson, N. A.	O	O	79643	Woods, C.	O	
184104	Wilson, R.	O	O	79646	Woods, H.	O	
883090	Wilson, R. B.	O	O	79894	Woods, P.	O	
3205871	Wilson, R. R.	O	O	80000	Woods, W. L.	O	
696115	Wilson, W.	O	O	79472	Woodger, S. G.	O	
811267	Wilson, W. A.	O	O	183118	Woodland, A. G.	O	
183352	Wilson, W. C.	O	X	80206	Woodland, T. W.	O	
100063	Wilson, W. J.	O	X	101440	Woodland, V. B.	O	
466956	Wilson, W. R.	O	O	231473	Woodroffe, J. E. F.	O	
602744	Winchester, A.	O	O	431175	Woodward, E. F.	O	

31ST BATTALION, C. E. F.

515

79469	Woodward, G. W.	O		811870	Wyseman, A.
464627	Woolridge, C. R.	O		446239	Xerri, C.
161181	Woolgar, S. A.	O		211014	Yager, H. A.
20111	Woollett, A.	O		435174	Yake, H.
79994	Wooley, H.	O		696100	Yarr, W. J.
696528	Woosey, S. S.	O	+ O	183528	Yates, J.
80148	Workman, G. H. S.	O		666483	Ychnevich, P.
79779	Worsley, Geo.	O		2621841	Yelland, F.
79462	Worster, H. E.	O		472353	Youles, F.
408556	Worth, H.	O		2538435	Young, A.
811011	Wortley, J. S.	O		809029	Young, A.
447535	Wright, H. A.	O		79802	Young, A. S. L.
808672	Wright, H. G.	O		183570	Young, A.
79669	Wright, J.	O		697006	Young, B.
186734	Wright, J.	O	M M.	80073	Young, C.
696540	Wright, J. C.	O		79494	Young, F. C.
2109973	Wright, J. L.	O		183843	Young, H.
100518	Wright, L. E.	O		3205076	Young, H. F.
79780	Wright, W.	O		231427	Young, J.
100583	Wright, W. C.	O		696434	Young, J.
438956	Wright, W. P.	O	M M.	79461	Young, L.
808464	Wyatt, R.	O		79460	Younger, D.
79895	Wyffels, F.	O		79556	Yull, D.
183663	Wylie, G. E.	O		101650	Zarkovich, M.
80179	Wynne, F. C.	O		425518	Zufelt, I.

The foregoing nominal roll was compiled from records furnished by the Department of National Defence, Ottawa, and revised after comparison with three other lists obtained from Battalion records.

This list is believed to be as accurate as possible, but should there be any inaccuracy still remaining it is hoped that the reader will realize the difficulties entailed in preparing a nominal roll of this nature.

Nominal Roll Sub-Committee:

L. Newby,
R. G. Flemons,
A. Wakelyn.